To my good friend

B. F. Geyer — from

James R. Fleming
U. S. attorney.

With love,
from
Jean Grant Alterogt
(Geyer)

and

Daniel Jordan Grant

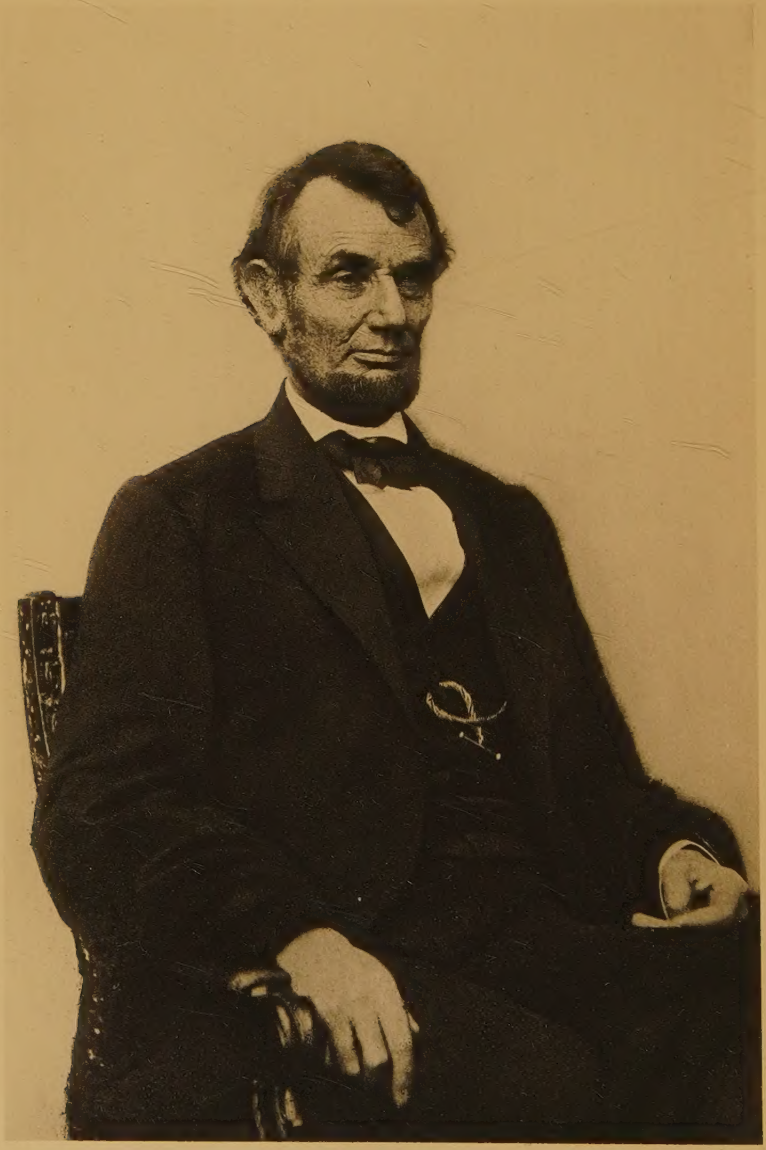
ABRAHAM LINCOLN

1809–1858

Standard Library Edition

In Four Volumes

VOLUME I



ABRAHAM LINCOLN

1809–1858

BY

ALBERT J. BEVERIDGE

With Illustrations

VOLUME I

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PREFACE

When Mr. Beveridge had finished his *Life of John Marshall*, he already had in view writing a Life of Abraham Lincoln, to be, as he expressed it, a companion piece to the Marshall, continuing the institutional interpretation of America and weaving it about the life and career of Lincoln as he had tried to weave the first part of such an interpretation around the life and career of Marshall. In the two works he would have covered the subject from colonial days to the end of the War of Secession. The story told in the volumes now published is complete to November, 1858.

The methods used by Mr. Beveridge in gathering the material for this work were controlled by the true spirit of research. He made his own investigations, questioning what had been published by others and trusting no agent without duly verifying his work. He made journeys to the Lincoln country, sifted the many traditions which have grown wherever the family rested, and sought to see for himself how far the neighborhood could influence the man. He was tireless in reading collections of papers still unpublished, in carefully going through files of newspapers preserved in many and widely separated cities, seeking the fact and coloring of narrative he used so skilfully and convincingly. In his own words he stated the value he placed upon such minute research:

'Facts when justly arranged interpret themselves. They tell the story. For this purpose a little fact is as important as what is called a big fact. The picture may be well-nigh finished, but it remains vague for want of one more fact.

'When that missing fact is discovered all others become clear and distinct; it is like turning a light, properly shaded, upon a painting which but a moment before was a blur in the dimness.'

Having located and obtained what seemed of importance he would write the chapter in its first form, or draft. That was a preliminary stage, for he would work over his material again and again, rewriting the entire chapter many times — a single chapter in the second volume was rewritten fifteen times — until it

had taken a shape which appeared to him fairly complete in contents, but still wanting the finish of a last revision. In that form he submitted it to recognized experts in the different phases of the history, asking, or rather urging them to correct misstatements of fact, or wrong inferences, or an unconscious bias of treatment.

The chapters of these volumes, except Chapter X in the second volume, are the result of the many recastings he gave to them. That last chapter is in the state of a first draft, admittedly unfinished, yet, dealing with a single situation, it is a sufficiently full summary of the debates with Douglas in the senatorial contest of 1858 in Illinois. Mr. Beveridge planned to devote a year to a final revision of the whole work. One familiar with his method would know that the process of revising would have been continued throughout the year, in the proof and even in the page form, about to go to press; for his active mind and trained sense of the power of the spoken sentence would suggest changes at every reading of manuscript or proof.

The text, then, was at the time of his death in substance what Mr. Beveridge had accepted as giving the sequence of the story, the principal features and the large drafts from the material he had so laboriously gathered from many sources. He had developed the main incidents of Lincoln's career and described the influences which had opened the opportunities to advance, in spite of serious rebuffs and downright defeat. He did not overload the narrative with the trivial and unessential, and rejected much which would have added to the picture; but he wished to show that as a politician, in its best as in its less laudable meaning, Lincoln was measured and judged in his generation and can only be rightly comprehended as such. From that aspect the story is complete. The narrative, as he left it, has not been modified or changed. Quotations and references in the text have been verified and obvious errors corrected. In form and substance the volumes are as Mr. Beveridge left them. His intention had been to end this first part of the 'Life' with Lincoln's inauguration in March, 1861, and nearly two years of intense political activity remained to be treated to round out the period. A sketch of those years has been appended, with no at-

tempt to deal in detail with the many influences and situations they presented, or to cover them after the manner of Mr. Beveridge. It may be imagined how he would have revelled in the story, making a study in practical politics, in the decay and growth of parties, and in the tyranny of party, so near to his aim in writing and to his own experience in public life; but no other could accomplish the history as he would have done it, or even forecast the outline as he would have sketched it. That is the real tragedy of the interrupted task.

There remains the pleasurable duty of acknowledging the aid and encouragement given to him and those working after him. That the acknowledgment is not in his own words is a misfortune. A part of it may be found in the notes running through the two volumes; another part cannot be expressed, for it was known only to him; and still another may be overlooked or wrongly measured. What follows will indicate the greater debts of obligation and a wish to recognize their extent.

The largest and most important aid was derived from Mr. Beveridge's friend of long standing, Jesse W. Weik, of Greencastle, Indiana. The law partner of William H. Herndon, and inheritor of his unique collection of Lincoln material, Mr. Weik had throughout his life greatly added to it and increased its value. Unused by any writer since Lamon except by Herndon and Weik in their joint *Life of Lincoln*, this remarkable collection was placed unreservedly at the service of Mr. Beveridge. The zeal and honest purpose of the gatherers have provided essential matter for almost every chapter. When used by Messrs. Herndon and Weik in their *Life of Lincoln*, a work unappreciated at the time, it was not possible to prove the richness of the record.

Second in importance was the unrestricted access given to the collection of Lincolniana belonging to Mr. Oliver R. Barrett, of Chicago. His enthusiasm and opportunity have built up a collection of remarkable size and scope, rich in personal association. Mr. Barrett not only gave freely the use of his possessions, but also aided Mr. Beveridge in locating other manuscripts.

Judge Otis M. Mather, of Hodgenville, and Judge Lafayette S. Pence, of Lebanon, Ky., have both placed their expert knowledge on the Lincolns in Kentucky at Mr. Beveridge's serv-

ice and have been as untiring as generous in searching the local records of that State and resolving the complicated problems that arose from tradition and imperfect knowledge on the subject.

Prof. Theodore C. Pease, of the University of Illinois, afforded special aid in making available the labors of others in the history of Illinois, in indicating where material for study could be found, and in reading the chapters as completed. Prof. Arthur C. Cole, of Ohio State University, performed many of the same services. From Mr. William L. Patton, of Springfield, Ill., were obtained many important documents and much information on Lincoln in Illinois. His willingness to answer questions was only matched by the accuracy of his replies. Mr. J. C. Thompson, of Springfield, has given time and thought to matters connected with the work on which his knowledge has proved its worth. Mr. Logan Hay, also of Springfield, has been helpful and obliging in his special knowledge of what relates to Springfield. Mr. Thomas D. Masters, of Springfield, freely gave of his time and coöperation. Documents and information have also been furnished by Judge Frank K. Dunn, of the Supreme Court of Illinois; Judge John J. Drennan, of Chicago; Mr. William H. Townsend, of Lexington, Ky.; Prof. Ulrich B. Phillips, of the University of Michigan; Miss Alice and Miss Fannie Fell, daughters of Jesse W. Fell; Dr. Charles L. Patton, of Springfield, possessor of the Lanphier MSS.; Mr. David Rankin Barbee, of Asheville, N.C.; Mr. Thomas C. Fisher, of Louisville, Ky.; and Mr. William Fortune, of Indianapolis, Ind.

Mr. Beveridge sent a draft of the chapters to a number of friends and experts in whose opinion he had confidence. He was thus specially indebted to Mr. Justice Oliver Wendell Holmes, of Washington, D.C.; Mr. John T. Morse, Jr., of Boston; Prof. Charles A. Beard, of New York; and Mr. Ellery Sedgwick, of Boston, who were most helpful in comment and in encouragement as the writing progressed. In their various interests the following also contributed their trained knowledge: Mr. J. Franklin Jameson, of the Carnegie Institution; Mr. Ferris Greenslet, of Boston; Prof. Chauncey S. Boucher, of the University of Illinois; Prof. Nathaniel W. Stephenson, of New

York; Prof. William O. Lynch, of Indiana University; Prof. Thomas M. Marshall, of Washington University, St. Louis; Prof. S. E. Morison, of Harvard University; the late Prof. John Spencer Bassett, of Smith College; Prof. James A. Woodburn, of Ann Arbor, Mich.; Prof. Frank L. Owsley, of Vanderbilt University, Nashville, Tenn.; Prof. Henry G. Pearson, of Boston; and Mr. H. J. Eckenrode, of Richmond, Va.

For their reading of certain chapters may be named Prof. Frank H. Hodder, of the University of Kansas, and Mr. William E. Connelley, of the Kansas State Historical Society, both of whom were liberal in aid and counsel; Prof. George R. Poage, of Illinois College; Prof. William W. Sweet, of DePauw University; Prof. Herbert E. Bolton, of the University of California; Prof. Eugene C. Barker, of the University of Texas; Mr. Robert L. O'Brien, of Boston; Hon. Jacob M. Dickinson, of Chicago; Judge Clarence R. Martin, of Indianapolis; the law office of Mr. George W. Wickersham; and Dean Henry M. Bates, of the Law School, University of Michigan.

From Mr. and Mrs. James W. Fesler, of Indianapolis, were received friendly criticism, comment, and encouragement. But of all who closely followed the preparation of the chapters no one had greater influence than Prof. Edward Channing, of Harvard University, whose scholarship and understanding of the history of the period were drawn upon heavily and can be only in part acknowledged in the notes.

Many special favors were obtained from many libraries. Among them may be named: the Library of Congress and its assistant librarians, the late Appleton P. C. Griffin and his successor Mr. Fred W. Ashley; the Illinois State Historical Society, its very capable librarian, the late Mrs. N. W. (Jessie Palmer) Weber, daughter of Gen. John M. Palmer, and her successor, Miss Georgia L. Osborne; the Boston Public Library and Mr. Frank C. Blaisdell, of the circulation department; the Indiana State Library, the librarian of which, the late Dr. Demarchus C. Brown, was useful in many ways; the Massachusetts State Library, and its librarian, Mr. Edward Redstone; the Newberry Library, Chicago, and its librarian, Mr. George B. Utley; the Massachusetts Historical Society, the

Chicago Historical Society, and the American Antiquarian Society, Worcester, Mass., and their officers. The *Chicago Tribune*, through Mr. Tiffany Blake, gave access to their files.

Mr. Paul M. Angle, of Springfield, Ill., has particularly verified references to the Journals of the Illinois House of Representatives and extracts from Illinois newspapers, and Mr. Edward H. Bohne, at one time secretary to Mr. Beveridge, has done the same service for references to or extracts from the volumes quoted by Mr. Beveridge.

To Mrs. Walter Farwell thanks are given for permission to use the portrait of Mrs. Stephen A. Douglas; to Mrs. Vardry Echols McBee, daughter of Preston S. Brooks, and James Elliott Heath for permission to use the portrait of Preston S. Brooks; and to Frederick Hill Meserve, of New York, for freely contributing from his great collection what was desired.

WORTHINGTON C. FORD

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ABRAHAM LINCOLN

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CHAPTER I

KENTUCKY: BIRTH AND CHILDHOOD

Biographies, as generally written, are not only misleading, but false. The author makes a wonderful hero of his subject. He magnifies his perfections, if he has any, and suppresses his imperfections. History is not history unless it is the truth. LINCOLN.

IN America, democracy was in control of Congress; and the popular idol, Thomas Jefferson, was enthroned in the Presidency. His choice of a successor had been ratified by the people, and James Madison was about to be inaugurated. The great radical and politician was soon to retire from office with such public acclaim as no President ever received.

In spite of grave mistakes, Jefferson had achieved this phenomenal favor with the masses chiefly by his sincere and expressed faith in the people, a faith they instinctively felt; also by his theoretical championship of States' rights and opposition to strong national government — an attitude then considered by the majority as best assuring individual liberty and preventing spoliation of the poor and the weak.

The Federalist party, first and most constructive of American political organizations, was fast dissolving. For five years, Hamilton, preëminent supporter of national power and the almost undisputed Federalist chieftain, had been in his grave. Notwithstanding the soundness of many Federalist policies, that party was disintegrating, principally because of its sharp and outspoken distrust of the people, but also by reason of its British partisanship, and its resistance to the westward advance of the Republic.

France and England were at war and, as the result of Jefferson's policy of prohibiting imports and abolishing foreign commerce, American trade on the sea had all but ceased and the American flag had well-nigh disappeared from the oceans. All

New England was tempestuous with wrath, and along her coasts the resistance to national law and authority, accompanied by talk of secession from the Union, swept like a winter hurricane. From the Supreme Bench of the United States was heard the voice of wisdom and statesmanship. Chief Justice Marshall, who was stoutly opposed to Jefferson's policy of commercial exclusion and non-resistance, nevertheless used stern language against acts 'destructive of the Union.'

While America was thus in convulsion, her commerce nearly extinct, her navy neglected and rotting, despised abroad and distracted at home, Europe was rocking with martial preparation. On the sea the British navy was triumphant and irresistible, but on the continent Napoleon still was master.

England, far-sighted, dexterous, implacable, had long since set in motion her traditional foreign policy and all Europe was now being combined against France. Napoleon, at the summit of his power, was not far distant from the downward road and yet pursued his destined course with a spirit, brilliancy, and dash not since equalled. Just as Jefferson's second term was closing, and the rumblings of disunion were sounding from New England, Napoleon was making ready to take the field once more, this time with an army of boys called to the colors two years in advance, four years in advance. With faith in his star still unshaken he exclaimed: 'I am starting for Vienna with my little conscripts, my name, and my long boots.'

While the foundations of the Union trembled and the Old World throbbed with armed activity and pulsed with intrigue; while, in the United States, democracy and virile government were antagonistic instead of harmonious; and while war made brilliant with uniform and pomp every capital of Europe; far from the turmoil, across the mountains, in a log cabin in the heart of Kentucky, on February 12, 1809, Abraham Lincoln was born.[1]

[1] Daniel Webster, then twenty-seven years of age, had not yet entered Congress; Henry Clay, at thirty-two, was already in the Senate and well started on his unprecedented and unequalled career; John C. Calhoun, also twenty-seven, was still in the Legislature of South Carolina; Lee was a child of two years; and Grant not yet born.

In Europe, February 12, 1809, was the birthday of another man who was destined profoundly to influence the thought of the world, Charles Darwin. Tennyson and

The earth was the floor of that shelter. The roof of rough slabs was held in place by poles and stones. In the log walls a small square opening, possibly covered with greased paper, let in a scant, dim light. Two long, broad slabs, fastened together and attached by hinges of wood or of hide to the side of a cut in the walls high enough for a man to pass through, served as a door.

At one end of this cabin was a rude fireplace of stone with a chimney of sticks and clay. In a corner opposite was a pallet or bed, the frame made by a crotched stick driven into the ground upon which the ends of a long and a short pole rested, the other ends thrust between the logs of the cabin. Across this frame were placed rough slats, and upon these bedding of some sort was spread.[1] The whole structure was of wood, no iron being available.[2]

This log hut stood on the edge of a tract of poor land, with few trees [3] and covered by tall, coarse grass. Immediately in front of the cabin the ground sloped sharply downward. A spring flowed from a horizontal cave-like channel of rock in the low hillside and, dropping abruptly into another but perpendicular opening of rock, disappeared. From this, the distinctive feature of the place, the land on which Thomas Lincoln and his family lived was then known as the 'Sinking Spring Farm.'

Yet farm it could hardly be called, so unproductive was it at that time. Nor was the spot attractive in other respects, save perhaps for the spring and three or four oaks that grew by it and

Gladstone, too, were born in that year. The period was productive of men of the first rank in letters and statesmanship. Victor Hugo and Cavour, and Disraeli, Dickens and Bright, Thackeray and Bismarck, were all born within the dozen years centering about 1809.

[1] 'He [Abraham Lincoln] was born . . . in an obscure back settlement of cane-brake society, in a hunter's hut not fit to be called a home.' Judge John B. Helm to W. H. Herndon, June 20, 1865. Weik MSS. The cabin in which Lincoln was born was torn down and the logs used for firewood by Henry Brother, who bought the Sinking Spring Farm in 1827 and lived in the cabin for some years. *Footprints of Abraham Lincoln:* J. T. Hobson, 15. The year of purchase is also given as 1835.

For methods of building cabins and bed frames, homes of more prosperous settlers, see *History of Elizabethtown:* Samuel Haycraft, 70–2. This history, first published in the *Elizabethtown News*, is a source book of repute.

[2] *Sketches of the West:* James Hall, II, 67.

[3] 'It is rather poor land and at that . . . day not worth over $1. per acre.' E. R. Burba to Herndon, Hodgenville, Ky., March 31, 1866. Weik MSS.

in the gentle hollow. Half a mile distant flowed the South Fork of Nolin Creek. Along this watercourse small trees lifted their modest tops, among which dogwood here and there sent forth its blossoms in springtime. During the winter months, a more cheerless place than the cabin by the Sinking Spring did not exist in all Kentucky.

The farm was just within the border of 'the Barrens,' that curious tract which so impressed Michaux, the French traveller and scientist, when he rode over it not long before Thomas Lincoln took his wife and infant daughter to inhabit the log house by the Sinking Spring. This section, seventy miles long and sixty miles broad, was made treeless from long-continued successive fires started by the Indians for the purpose of opening a place where the buffalo could graze.[1] It contained many subterranean caverns and springs similar to that hard by the Lincoln cabin, but not so picturesque, and was barren of other vegetation than the tall grass and a scattering of small trees along the infrequent streams. Few people then lived in the region.[2]

The picture of Thomas Lincoln, the father of Abraham Lincoln, is distinct, clear-cut. Research has left no feature vague, except his stature.[3] He was compactly built, inclined to stoutness. His face was round, complexion swarthy, hair black and

'At the birth of Lincoln it was a barran waste so to speak, save some little patches on the creek bottom.' Burba to Herndon, May 25, 1866. Weik MSS.

Even to-day [1924] this land is estimated at only fifty dollars per acre. Judge O. M. Mather of Hodgenville, Ky., to author, July 14, 1924.

In references hereafter to be made, particular weight must be given to any statement of E. R. Burba, of Hodgenville, Ky., because of his extensive acquaintance and credibility. He was a hot advocate of Lincoln: 'I verily believe . . . he was the greatest man since . . . Washington.' Burba to Herndon, March 31, 1866. Weik MSS.

'He [Burba] was elected Clerk and served as such for many years. No man in the County had a wider acquaintance than he, and I think you may rely on what he says.' Judge O. M. Mather to author, July 17, 1924. Also 'History of Hodgenville,' O. M. Mather, in *LaRue County News*, April 22, 1920.

[1] *Kentucky: A Pioneer Commonwealth:* N. S. Shaler, 28–30. Prof. Shaler says that 'in another two hundred years the Indians would probably have reduced the larger part of the surface of Kentucky to the condition of the prairies.' And see *History of Pioneer Kentucky:* R. S. Cotterill, 2–3.

[2] 'On the road where the plantations are closest together we counted but eighteen in a space of sixty or seventy miles.' F. A. Michaux's *Travels:* Reuben Gold Thwaites, III, 220–1. See also *ib.*, 217–8.

[3] He 'was 5–10½ high very stoutly built and weighed 196 pounds. . . . He was a man of great strength . . . could stand fatigue for any length of time.' Dennis Hanks's second statement, June 13, 1865. Weik MSS.

coarse, eyes brown.[1] He was improvident,[2] yet in a slow and plodding way industrious. He was good-natured,[3] inoffensive, law-abiding, notably honest.[4] Without a vestige of book learning [5] he was able only to write his name in a painful scrawl; but he preferred to make his mark and usually did so, even in legal documents of importance to himself in the trivial litigation presently to be noted.[6] He had no use for books and, in languid fashion, despised all print.[7]

He was a carpenter of sorts,[8] and did well two or three jobs

'Thomas Lincoln was a large man, say 6 feet or a little less, strong and muscular.' Nathaniel Grigsby's statement, Sept. 12, 1865. Weik MSS.

'Thomas Lincoln . . . was rather a low heavy built clumsy honest man.' Samuel Haycraft to Judge John B. Helm, July 5, 1865. Weik MSS.

'He was a square, stout-built man of only ordinary height.' Haycraft to Herndon, no date, Weik MSS.

Like E. R. Burba, Samuel Haycraft of Elizabethtown, Ky., is a witness of the highest possible credibility. No more esteemed and trusted man lived in Hardin County, where he was clerk of both County and Circuit Courts from 1816 to 1857 inclusive, a member of the Kentucky State Senate and 'one of the most determined . . . supporters of the Union.' Haycraft knew personally those of whom he writes; and, like Burba, was a staunch friend of President Lincoln.

[1] Hanks's second Chicago statement. 'Darke hair Rather Corse Hazel Eye . . . Broder face than Abe Walked slow and Shore a Mity strought Man.' Hanks to Herndon, no date, Weik MSS.

[2] He 'was not a thrifty man of his class.' Helm to Herndon, June 20, 1865.

[3] In his two Chicago statements Dennis Hanks tells of a desperate fight without anger or malice between Thomas and some one, just to see which was the better man. Lincoln whipped his friendly antagonist 'in less than two minutes.' In these statements made within a week, he names two different men as having been Lincoln's discomfited opponent. Weik MSS.

This fight is probably one of Hanks's inventions, made because 'unless a man could boast of whipping somebody, he was not taken up in the best society.' Burba to Herndon, May 25, 1866. Weik MSS. Burba adds: 'I never heard of any of the Lincoln family thus engaged.' *Ib.*

Dennis Hanks is watchful in the extreme in exalting the Hanks and Lincoln families; but aside from his boastfulness ('Now William be Shore and have My Name very Conspikus.') and championship of his clan, his statements are accurate. Luckily, it is easy to distinguish between fact and imagination in his letters and interviews.

[4] 'Thomas Lincoln was considered to be a strictly honest hard working man.' Burba to Herndon, March 31, 1866. Weik MSS.

'He was a plain unpretending and scrupulously an honest man.' Haycraft to Herndon, Dec. 7, 1866. Weik MSS.

[5] 'When I first knew him in 1805 or 1806, he was a very illiterate man.' Haycraft to Helm, Elizabethtown, July 5, 1865. Weik MSS.

[6] See p. 22, *infra*.

[7] He 'looked upon bone and mussel sufficient to make the man and, that time spent in school as doubly wasted.' Helm to Herndon, June 20, 1865. Weik MSS.

[8] He was 'a tolerable country . . . carpenter, worked some on my father's house in

that were remembered. But his heaviest undertaking turned out unhappily; his employer, an important man in the community, was so dissatisfied that, as we shall see, payment was refused and two law-suits resulted.[1] He was a farmer in a desultory way, but he liked hunting more than anything else, delighted to roam the forests and kill such game as came within convenient range. Thus the meat was supplied upon which his wife and children chiefly subsisted.[2]

Thomas Lincoln was the youngest son of Abraham Lincoln who, about 1776, had gone to Kentucky to look over the country and had entered one thousand acres of land there. He lived in Rockingham County, Virginia, where he owned an excellent farm of two hundred and sixty-two acres on which his children were born, Thomas on January 6, 1778.[3] John Lincoln, father of Abraham, had come from Pennsylvania, in which State the family had settled in the course of several migrations. The genealogy of the Lincolns runs clear and unbroken to its source in England; all were upright persons of moderate substance and good reputations in the various communities where they lived; one or two rose to some prominence,[4] but none showed any quality that marked the subject of these volumes.

1805, and afterward did all the carpenter's work on Hardin Thomas house.' Haycraft to Helm, July 5, 1865. Weik MSS. Also Haycraft's *History of Elizabethtown*, 123. Also Haycraft to Herndon, no date, Weik MSS.

'The old man was a kind of rough carpenter and quite useful in that way. in those days the country was sparsely settled.' Burba to Herndon, March 31, 1866. Weik MSS.

[1] See p. 22, *infra*.

[2] He 'made his living by labor and hunting till game became scarce.' Helm to Herndon, June 20, 1865. Weik MSS.

'Thomas Lincoln . . . delighted in having a good hunt. . . . [It] was a great source of subsistance.' He 'could with propriety be classed with the "Hunters of Kentucky." he seldom failed of success.' Hanks's first Chicago statement. Weik MSS.

[3] These dates are taken from *History of the Lincoln Family:* Waldo Lincoln, 193–4, 333 — a comprehensive and trustworthy volume on the Lincoln Genealogy. Louis A. Warren, *Lincoln's Parentage and Childhood*, 40–2, cites the Tax Books of Washington and Hardin Counties for 1795–7 and asserts an earlier year of birth. In 1795 and 1796 Thomas was listed as between sixteen and twenty years and in 1797 as twenty-one or over. If he became of age in 1797 he was born in 1776, but this is not supported by the President's statement that Thomas was six years of age when his father Abraham was killed. It is possible that Thomas, for some reason, made himself to be older than he really was. The family Bible record — January 6, 1778 — is not final, as it is mutilated.

[4] The Lincoln migrations were first described by Professor Learned of the University of Pennsylvania, and his volume containing deeds, wills, and other documents is the

In Rockingham County, Virginia, then, we find the father of Thomas Lincoln in 1780, a well-to-do Virginia farmer, who, without the help of slaves, tilled his own fields. The soil of this county then was and it still remains of the richest in the United States. The county had been settled by Germans from Pennsylvania who had soon turned into a garden its fertile acres. No part of the Shenandoah Valley was or is more productive, or engaging to the eye, than the county of Rockingham.[1]

John Lincoln had given to Abraham two hundred and ten acres of this pleasing farm, and the son, by purchase, had added fifty-two acres.[2] Prosperous neighbors were plentiful and not distant; the population of Rockingham County then was not less than five thousand, consisting of the families of small farmers like Lincoln himself, most of whom possessed few if any slaves, the farm work being done by the owners of the soil and their sons.

The men of proper age who were drawn belonged to the militia and, at one time, Abraham was captain of his company.[3] He took no interest in the Revolution, however, and at the darkest hour of the War for Independence sold his Virginia fields for £5,000 in the then greatly depreciated Virginia currency,[4] and, like many others, plunged into the vast and dangerous wilderness beyond the mountains.

Why Abraham Lincoln should have decided to leave his agreeable surroundings in Virginia can only be conjectured. It would appear that many motives formed his resolution. Virginia was hard pressed to raise funds for carrying on the conflict with Great Britain and the Legislature was laying mountains of

most authoritative treatment of the subject. *Abraham Lincoln, An American Migration:* Marion Dexter Learned. *History of the United States:* Edward Channing, VI, 255.

[1] *History of Rockingham County:* John W. Wayland, chaps. I–IV.

[2] Waldo Lincoln, 193.

[3] *Ib.*

[4] Lincoln sold his Rockingham farm February 18, 1780, but his wife Bathsheba did not join in the deed until September 24, 1781. Waldo Lincoln, 193–4.

At the time of the sale the depreciation of Virginia currency had become so great that the Legislature established the rate of forty to one. *Statutes at Large:* W. W. Hening, X, 348. A year later the Legislature enacted that paper money theretofore issued by the state should no longer be legal tender and should be redeemed by exchange of loan office certificates at the rate of one thousand to one in specie; but provided that until October 1, 1782, warrants for unappropriated land 'at the price now established by

taxes on the people.[1] Soldiers, too, were continually being recruited and conscription was talked of.[2] Continental currency had become worthless and ceased to circulate; and that of the Commonwealth was falling like a plummet in fresh water. In 1780 the prospects of the American cause were desperate.

Against this background of gloom and disaster appeared rosy and inviting pictures of Kentucky, then a part of Virginia. A distant relative by marriage of Abraham Lincoln,[3] Daniel Boone and his little band of adventurers had brought back from that region accounts of a land, lovely and opulent beyond human dreams — 'a second paradise,' Boone called it; [4] and went back himself with his family to live there.[5] Even more weighty than these inducements to western migration were the land laws passed by the Legislature of Virginia in 1779. By these Acts the rights of actual settlers already on the ground were defined and the confusion of land titles in Kentucky somewhat untangled; a Land Office was established and methods provided for making settlements, surveys, and to obtain certificates and patents.[6]

law,' might be purchased by holders of depreciated Continental or state paper money at its face value. Act of November, 1781. Hening, x, 456. Since the Legislature found it necessary to fix as a matter of law such rates of depreciation, the actual value of state currency was, of course, much less.

The following year the time of redemption at 1000 to 1 was extended to June 1, 1783, and the privilege of buying land warrants extended to the same date. *Ib.*, xi, 133. And see *History of American Currency:* Davis Rich Dewey, 39–55.

[1] As examples of these war time tax laws in 1779 see Hening, x, 165–72; 182–8; 189–91; in 1780, 241–54; 271–2; in 1781, 490–2; 501–17. (This act allowed payment even of taxes on land at the rate of one to ten; and provided that other taxes might be paid in tobacco, hemp, or flour. *Ib.*, 508.)

[2] A draft of every twenty-fifth man actually was enacted in 1778. Hening, ix, 589. This failing, a more stringent law was enacted in 1779. *Ib.*, x, 82.

[3] Waldo Lincoln, 52.

[4] Boone's Autobiography in *The Discovery, Purchase and Settlement of Kentucky:* John Filson, 54. Filson wrote Boone's autobiography which was widely circulated and gave Boone his fame. Archibald Henderson describes him as 'that inaccurate and frenzied amanuensis.' *Am. Hist. Rev.*, xx, 86, and Thwaites says that Filson's narrative is untrustworthy. *Life of Daniel Boone:* Reuben Gold Thwaites, 153, 199.

Col. Richard Henderson founded Transylvania 'solely' because of Boone's description and persuasion (*ib.*, 114); and Henderson, after visiting Kentucky, also wrote that the country was 'a paradise.' *Ib.*, 124. Also *Conquest of the Old Southwest:* Archibald Henderson, 159.

[5] Boone surveyed many large tracts for himself, as for example: 'Aperel the 22 1785 on the Bank of Cantuckey Survayd for Dal Boone 5000 acres,' etc. *Boone:* Thwaites, 208–9.

[6] Hening, x, 35–65, and see *History of Kentucky:* Lewis Collins, i, 253–7.

Under the pressure of economic conditions of which these laws were an expression, the trickle of emigrants became a thin stream.[1] But stronger than the expelling force of taxes, military service and war burdens, stronger than the lure of romantic descriptions or persuasive laws, was that instinct for expansion which, from the first, has been an outstanding characteristic of the American people. This impulse to seek new lands, to occupy a far country, to invade and conquer forest and prairie was the compelling cause of pioneer advance; and it is the most important fact in the economic development of America. Through all other concrete and practical motives of Abraham Lincoln for leaving his comfortable Virginia farm ran, like living nerves, this yearning for the wilderness and distant places.[2]

Having chosen a tract in which to set up a new home in Kentucky, he brought his family from Virginia sometime between 1782 and 1784.[3] Upon Land Office warrants purchased with part of the currency received for his Rockingham farm,[4] he had entered three tracts of land aggregating twelve hundred acres, himself and sons surveying one by the crude and inaccurate methods of the time.[5] For these tracts patents were later issued, the first by Beverly Randolph, Lieutenant Governor of Virginia, May 17, 1787, for eight hundred acres on Green River in Lincoln County; the second by James Garrard, Governor of

[1] The western movement was almost wholly for new lands. By 1790, over 100,000 had gone West. Petitions for titles are full of the germs of squatter sovereignty. These settlers were intensely individualistic and fought land companies as fiercely as they fought Indians. See *Sectionalism in Virginia:* Charles Henry Ambler, 42–5.

Travellers at the time, however, attributed western migration to restlessness and daring. *Rambler in North America:* Charles Joseph Latrobe, 72–3.

The immigrants to Kentucky were almost exclusively from Virginia and North Carolina; there were 'none from Europe, and scarcely any from the eastern states.' These pioneers were, by nature and training, hunters and soldiers, fearless, daring, and thoroughly American. Hall, II, 95–7.

[2] Collins says that there was 'a flood of immigration' (Collins, I, 253); but in comparison with the later volume of settlers, the incoming pioneers of 1780–5 were not impressive in number.

[3] Waldo Lincoln, 194.

[4] These Land Office Warrants, dated March 4, 1780, were numbered 3333, 3334, and 3335, each for 400 acres, and for each Lincoln paid £160.

[5] The Floyd's Fork tract, the survey being made May 7, 1785. Many settlers did their own surveying; 'with a compass and chain, a few hours' work would suffice to mark the boundaries of a thousand-acre tract.' *Boone:* Thwaites, 119.

Kentucky, July 2, 1798, for four hundred acres on the Long Run of Floyd's Fork in Jefferson County.[1] Such were the moderate land holdings of Abraham Lincoln, fairly large for a small farmer, although inconsiderable compared to the estates of opulent planters which often ran into tens of thousands of acres.

Evidence exists that he lived for a time on his land on Green River, Lincoln County. In 1779, Jacob Gum and his brother-in-law, Oliver Dever, obtained eight hundred acres on Green River under the Virginia 'Occupancy Law' and, setting up an 'improver's cabin' on the tract, lived there, thus complying with the requirements of the law. Lincoln bought the two warrants from them in June, 1780, and the description of the land reads: '800 acres six miles below Green River Lick including an improvement [the cabin] made by Jacob Gum and Oliver Dever.' The description was imperfect, giving no county, and Lincoln filed in the clerk's office of Lincoln County a more correct description: '800 acres lying and being on Green River six miles below Green River Lick in the County of Lincoln.' Proper entry of the corrected description was made in the Surveyor's Book [2] and on Oct. 2, 1784, the land was surveyed for Lincoln by William Montgomery, assistant surveyor of the county, both Abraham and Hannaniah Lincoln being present. There can be no doubt of Lincoln's occupying the land and cabin, as he was bound to do under the Virginia law, then quite rigidly enforced.

Gum removed to Nolin Creek, Nelson County, in 1782 or 1783, as his deposition [3] of Oct. 2, 1787, in a suit on Miller's

[1] A tax return made by Mordecai Lincoln in 1796 listed the three tracts mentioned and also one of 1134½ acres on Green River, which stood in the name of John Reed but belonged to Abraham Lincoln. This last holding, represented by warrant No. 14487, was originally 2268 acres, but, it is claimed, Reed forged a release of one-half. Warren, 10, 11.

It appears that in December, 1782, Abraham entered, on Treasury Warrant No. 5994, five hundred acres in Campbell (now Pendleton) County, being a part of two entries of 1000 acres each noted in Boone's Survey Book as for 'Lincoln.' Draper MSS. This tract was not even surveyed until 1798, more than ten years after Lincoln's death, and the patent was not issued until June 30, 1799. Waldo Lincoln, 195–6. It was sold by Mordecai Lincoln June 8, 1808, and it may have been from his share of the proceeds that Thomas Lincoln got the money to buy the Sinking Spring farm. See p. 23, *infra*.

[2] Surveyor's Entry Book, vol. 2, Book E, 379, Lincoln County Court Records.

[3] Deposition Book B, 406. Records of Nelson County Quarter Sessions Court.

Big Spring, on Nolin Creek, shows, and that was in all probability the time when Abraham Lincoln brought his family to Green River. How long they remained there, before removing to land adjoining Hughes Station, Jefferson County, has not been determined.[1]

Sometime, within a few years after he had settled with his family in this new wild land, the father, while working a short distance from his cabin, was killed by an Indian.[2] The elder son,

[1] This important location of Abraham Lincoln in Lincoln County has been supplied by Judge L. S. Pence. From him also has been obtained the following description of Abraham Lincoln's land in Jefferson County: '1780, May 29, lying on Floyd's Fork, lying about 2 miles above [Powell's] trace ford crossing of Long Run.'

[2] The time and place of the pioneer Abraham's death were long in doubt. Family tradition gave 1784, and Judges Mather and Pence inferred from certain court records the spring of 1788 as the time and Nelson County as the place. Although the administrator of his estate was appointed Oct. 14, 1788, in Nelson County, Lincoln held no land in it. In a suit brought in 1797 by Mordecai Lincoln, heir at law of his father, he stated that his father died without a will May, 1786. His 'widow' remained on the farm certainly until Sept., 1786, for her name, so described, is among those of the vicinity who subscribed to an expedition against the Indians, her contribution being a gun. Warren, 297–8.

On Nov. 15, 1787, in the case of James Davis, Administrator, *vs.* Abraham Lincoln and Arvin Kilbreath, an alias was issued in Nelson County against the latter, living in Jefferson County, the summons having been executed on Abraham Lincoln, which indicates that he was then living in Nelson County. For this document I am indebted to Judge L. S. Pence, of Lebanon, Kentucky, who has made long and painstaking research, and who believes that Lincoln was wounded by an Indian in Jefferson County, 'wildly fled' to old man Richard Berry's — his brother-in-law — in Nelson County and lived for more than a year after the attack upon him. Judge Pence believes that Abraham died in Nelson County in April, 1788, as the above suit was discontinued, May 14, 1788, the first sitting of the court after the death of the resident defendant. L. S. Pence to author, May 20, 1924.

On the same day another suit, Aaron Colvin, Assignee, *vs.* Abraham and Hannaniah Lincoln, was also 'discontinued.' Order Book, Nelson County Court, 1788. Judge O. M. Mather, who furnishes this citation, believes that this suit was abated because of the death of the defendant, Abraham Lincoln. Mather to author, Aug. 11, 1924. Judges Mather and Pence agree that the only probable inference from these records is that Lincoln died in Nelson County in the spring of 1788.

In further evidence Judge Pence calls attention to an order of the court of Nelson County, Dec., 1786, appointing James Winn and William Allen to settle a boundary dispute with Jefferson County. The report of the agents has not been found, but the situation suggests that in Sept., 1785, when the first court was held at 'Bairdstown,' Lincoln's plantation and domicile were included in Nelson County, and the summons of 1787 and administration over his personal estate in 1788 would rest upon his being within the jurisdiction of Nelson County. Later the disputed boundary was set back into the original Jefferson County. Lincoln may have been shot in Jefferson County and fleeing to Nelson County lived there a sufficient time to create a legal jurisdictional status for administration of his estate. L. S. Pence to W. C. Ford, June 25, 1927.

Abraham's land adjoined that of Morgan Hughes (Hughes Station), was surveyed on the same day as Hughes' and both properties were in Jefferson County.

Mordecai, in turn shot the savage and rescued his brother Thomas who appears to have been with his father at the time.[1]

The widow with her children soon left for Nelson County [2] where the family lived for some years. It would seem that Mordecai, the most intelligent and energetic as well as the oldest son, took charge of his father's holdings by common consent, managed the family's affairs, selling the land when he liked and dividing the proceeds. The English law of descents had been abolished by Virginia, and inheritances went equally to the children of intestates.[3] So, as we shall see, Thomas got his share of the proceeds of his father's small estate when his perhaps more provident brother disposed of any part of it.

Thomas appears to have been held in small esteem by his brother and little attention would seem to have been given to him. While Mordecai acquired, in some way, a fair education for a pioneer farmer and could write well, no more ignorant boy than Thomas could be found in the backwoods. At any rate, after his sixteenth year he roved about, now here, now there, in this county and in that.[4] Once he journeyed through the woods to Tennessee, where he lived for some months with an uncle. By the time he was twenty-one years old, however, he seems to have settled down to what, for him, was a steady life in a given place.

On September 2, 1803, with money given him by Mordecai as Thomas's share of the proceeds of a sale of land inherited from the father,[5] he bought of John T. Slater for £118 two hundred and thirty-eight acres of land in Hardin County, about eight miles north of the prosperous and thriving village of Elizabethtown; [6] but it does not appear that Thomas ever tilled his soil,

[1] In 1782 Indian warfare became intense and lasted for several years. Collins (ed. 1874), I, 254–7. Between 1783 and 1790, 1500 Kentuckians were killed by the Indians. *Boone:* Thwaites, 205.

[2] Waldo Lincoln, 201–2. This book and all biographies say that the widow and her children went to Washington County; but that county was not created until 1792, when it was cut off from Nelson. Collins, II, 748.

[3] Act of October, 1785, Hening, XII, 138–40; and see Clay *vs.* Cousins (1824): T. B. Monroe's (Ky.) *Reports*, I, 75–8.

[4] 'That Thomas was of a roving disposition cannot be denied.' Waldo Lincoln, 335.

[5] *The Paternity of Abraham Lincoln:* William E. Barton, 267.

[6] Deed Book B, 253, Records Clerk of Hardin County, Ky.

or, indeed, that he even lived upon his farm. He remained in Hardin County, however, probably in Elizabethtown, for he served on juries four times, and guarded prisoners three times in 1803–04.[1] He owned a horse in 1804–05 and was taxed for it in those years.[2]

On March 25, 1805, the County Court appointed him and three other young men 'Patrolers in the northwardly district of this County,' with Christopher Bush as captain.[3] The law required patrollers to seize any slave strolling without permit or found at any unlawful assemblage and, 'at the discretion of the captain,' to administer not to exceed ten lashes on his or her bare back; and to do the same to any slave 'found in the possession of any article of property, without such writing.'[4] These officers had to patrol as many hours as the court directed, 'but not . . . less than twelve hours in each month,' the captain receiving four shillings and each assistant three shillings for every twelve hours of service, and being exempt from militia service during the term of appointment.[5]

Although Hardin County at that time was very large, being one hundred and forty miles long by fifty miles wide,[6] roughly speaking, there were comparatively few slaves in the whole extent of it, not more than four hundred at most.[7] These must have been very recalcitrant and dangerous to have required so many patrollers to keep them in hand; or, perhaps, the letter of the law was stretched, according to the free and easy frontier

[1] Hardin County Order Book, 1803–04.

[2] Tax records Hardin County, 1804–05.

[3] Order Book of Hardin County Court, March Term, 1805, 13. This Christopher Bush was the father of Sarah Bush, the second wife of Thomas Lincoln, and of Isaac Bush, from whom Lincoln bought the Sinking Spring Farm. See p. 24, *infra*.

[4] *Acts of Kentucky:* Nov. 29, 1799, chap. XIV, 36–8. If the slaves were taken before the court thirty-nine lashes might be inflicted.

[5] *Ib.*, and Hening, XI, 489.

[6] Haycraft, 21.

[7] According to the census of 1800, the total population of Hardin County was then 3653, of which the number of slaves was 325, and that would be about the number when Thomas Lincoln was patroller.

That part of Hardin County which is now LaRue, where Lincoln was born and where the family lived until they went to Indiana in 1816, was peopled almost exclusively by whites. 'There were very few slaves in the whole country round here then perhaps not 50 in what is now this County.' Burba to Herndon, March 31, 1866. Weik MSS.

methods of the time, and the duty of patrollers made to cover white vagabonds and peace-disturbing wanderers who appear to have infested Hardin County in unusual numbers during those years.[1]

But Thomas Lincoln did not long continue official slave supervisor, nor do the records show that he received anything for his services. Five months after his appointment, nine other patrollers were named for Elizabethtown exclusively, Thomas Lincoln not being one of them.[2] In 1807 six patrollers were appointed for the northern part of Hardin County and again Thomas Lincoln was not included.[3] It is clear, however, that in 1805 he had lived in Hardin County long enough, and had established a reputation good enough, to serve briefly as a peace officer, albeit his strictly legal duties in that capacity were solely the watching and whipping of obnoxious slaves.

In Elizabethtown there dwelt one Joseph Hanks, a carpenter by trade, who must have been kept busy in that rapidly growing frontier town. From him, Thomas Lincoln got his knowledge of the craft.[4] Joseph Hanks had a niece, Nancy, the natural child of his sister Lucy Hanks;[5] and this girl was destined to become

[1] Haycraft, 63–4.

[2] Hardin County Court Order Book, 58, Nov. 26, 1805. These patrollers agreed to 'make no charge . . . for their services.'

[3] *Ib.*, 180, Sept. 28, 1807. The appointment of so many slave supervisors of this little town alone is curious. It would seem to indicate unusual lawlessness at the small county-seat.

[4] Hanks's first Chicago statement. Weik MSS.

[5] On Nov. 24, 1789, the Grand Jury of Mercer County presented [indicted] Lucy Hanks, the mother of Nancy, for some offence; but on May 25, 1790, the case was 'discontinued.' Records Mercer County, Harrodsburg, Ky., Order Book I, 415, 516. This document was discovered by Barton, but for it I am indebted to Judge L. S. Pence of Lebanon, Ky., who writes: 'Evidently Lucy was indicted, as we say, for "unbecoming conduct."' Letters to author, June 18 and June 21, 1924.

It would appear that such indictments were common; Collins chronicles that of seventeen cases before the first session of the first court at Harrodsburg in the spring of 1783, eight were for fornication. Collins, I, 258.

Mercer County was then a part of Lincoln County, one of the three counties into which Kentucky was originally divided. See Collins, II, under title 'Mercer County.'

Lucy Hanks was finally married to Henry Sparrow, April 3, 1791, in Mercer County, Ky., Records in office Clerk of County Court, Mercer County.

The date of the birth of Nancy Hanks is unknown; but since she is supposed to have been twenty-five or twenty-six years of age when she married Thomas Lincoln, she probably was born in 1783 or 1784, six or seven years before her mother, Lucy Hanks, married Henry Sparrow.

the mother of Abraham Lincoln. For some years she had made her home with an aunt, Betsy Hanks, who had married Thomas Sparrow. The father of Nancy Hanks is unknown, although, in an unwonted burst of confidence, Lincoln told his law partner that his maternal grandfather was 'a well bred Virginia planter'; and from this source flowed, as Lincoln believed, his noblest powers.[1]

The picture of Nancy Hanks is as uncertain and confused as that of Thomas Lincoln is fixed and clear. Dim as the dream of a shifting mirage, her face and figure waver through the mists of time and rumor. Those who knew her disagree even as to the color of her eyes, the shade of her hair, her physical build and

[1] *Herndon's Lincoln* (1st ed., Belford-Clarke & Co., 1890), I, 3–4; and *ib.*, in reprint by Herndon-Lincoln Publishing Co. This work was the joint product of William Henry Herndon and Jesse William Weik and will be cited in these notes as 'Herndon.' Also Herndon to Weik, Jan. 19, 1886. Weik MSS.

'Lincoln once told me that his mother . . . was the illegitimate child of a Virginia planter; he told me never to tell it while he lived and this I have religiously kept and observed.' *Ib.*

That Nancy Hanks was a natural child was well-known; and the fact was talked of by neighbors and their children, even when living in Indiana and long after her death. See 'Lincoln in Indiana': Rev. J. Edward Murr, *Indiana Magazine of History*, XIII, 332–4. Mr. Murr rests his statement on interviews with members of his congregation who were boyhood friends of Lincoln.

'His [Lincoln's] mother was an illegitimate child. I have always understood that from what my mother said about it.' Statement of a natural son of Sophie Hanks to Arthur E. Morgan, *Atlantic Monthly*, CXXV, 218. Sophie Hanks was a daughter of Sarah or Polly Hanks who, 'though she never married, had six children.' *Ib.*, 208.

Another Nancy Hanks, sister of Lucy, was the mother of Dennis Hanks, who was also born out of wedlock: 'I am a Base Born Child My Mother was Nancy Hanks the Ant of A Lincolns Mother.' Hanks to Herndon, Feb. 22, 1866. Weik MSS.

The father of Dennis Friend Hanks was Charles Friend: 'My mother . . . sayes your Grandfather was my father.' Hanks to Charles Friend as quoted in Friend to Herndon, Aug. 20, 1889. Weik MSS. 'My GrandFather Charles [Friend] is said to be the Father of D. F. H. The Old Man believed it himself.' Same to same, Feb. 22, 1866; also July 31, 1889; and Burba to Herndon, March 31, 1866. Weik MSS.

This Nancy Hanks afterwards lived with Levi Hall, probably as a 'common-law wife,' since no record of a marriage has been discovered. This couple followed the Lincolns to Indiana, where they died; and a son of theirs, Squire Hall, afterwards went with the Lincolns to Illinois.

In order to establish the regularity of the birth of Nancy Hanks, her cousin, Dennis, insisted that her name was Sparrow, daughter of Thomas Sparrow and Betsy (Hanks) Sparrow, with whom the child was left and made her home. Thomas and Betsy Sparrow married in 1796.

'He [Thomas Lincoln] married Miss Nancy Sparrow.' Hanks's first Chicago statement. Weik MSS. 'if you call hir Hanks you make hir a Base born child which is not treu. . . . Now Billy this question is all gamon.' Hanks to Herndon, Feb. 10, 1866. Weik MSS. 'hir Madin Name Nancy Sparrow So what is the use of all this.' Same to same, Feb. 22, 1866. Weik MSS.

height.[1] She was absolutely illiterate. No signature of Nancy Hanks has yet been discovered; whenever she had to sign a legal document she made her mark. There is no evidence whatever that she could read. At the very best, she was simply an attractive young pioneer woman, and of a class [2] having the least and poorest opportunities for any kind of education such as the primitive schools of the time afforded.

But the qualities of her mind and character were impressed more distinctly than was her physical appearance. All remember that she was uncommonly intelligent; had 'Remarkable Keen perseption,' as Dennis Hanks put it.[3] Dennis waxes enthusiastic about the mind and heart of his maternal cousin with whom he had been brought up in the Sparrow sanctuary; [4] 'She was Keen, shrewd — smart,' he told Herndon; 'I do say highly intellectual by nature. Her memory was strong, her judgment . . . accurate. She was Spiritually and ideally inclined.' [5] Nathaniel Grigsby, too, declares that she was 'Known for the extraordinary strength of her mind . . . a brilliant woman . . . of great good sense and

[1] 'She was a woman of rather low stature, but heavy and well set.' Haycraft to Herndon, no date. Weik MSS.

Again: she 'was rather a heavy built Squatty woman.' Haycraft to Helm, July 5, 1865. Weik MSS.

On the other hand Dennis Hanks declares that she was 'Spare Made thin Visage . . . Lite hare and Blue Eyes.' Hanks to Herndon, Weik MSS.; but in his second Chicago statement Hanks says that Nancy's 'hair was dark — eyes blueish green,' that she was five feet eight inches tall and weighed 'one hundred and thirty pounds.'

She 'was a Medium Sized Woman, rather spare in her person, fair complexion, light Hair, Blue Eyes.' A. H. Chapman's statement, no date, Weik MSS.

'She had dark Hair Hazle Eyes, was 5 feet 7 inches high a spare delicate form, weighed about 120 pounds.' John Hanks to John Miles as quoted in Miles to Herndon, May 25, 1865. Weik MSS.

'Her hair was black . . . eyes . . . blue . . . rather above medium hight, more spare made than otherwise . . . rather coarse featured.' Brooner to David Turnham, as quoted in Turnham to Herndon, Nov. 19, 1866. Weik MSS.

'She was . . . of pale complexion, dark hair, sharp features, high forhead, bright keen gray or hazel Eyes.' Nathaniel Grigsby's statement, Sept. 12, 1865. Weik MSS. Grigsby was only seven years old when he first saw Nancy Hanks and but nine years of age when she died; and he made his statement from hearsay to Herndon forty-seven years later.

[2] 'She [Nancy Hanks] was very obscure.' Helm to Herndon, June 20, 1865. Weik MSS.

[3] Hanks to Herndon, no date, but 1865. Weik MSS.

[4] Friend to Herndon, Aug. 20, 1889. Weik MSS.

[5] Hanks's second Chicago statement. Weik MSS.

moral[i]ty.' [1] All testify that she was inordinately kind and affectionate.[2]

Thomas Lincoln, then at least twenty-eight years of age, had been looking for a wife, it appears, and had asked Sarah Bush, the daughter of his patroller captain, Christopher Bush, to marry him; but she had refused.[3] Thomas next proposed to Nancy Hanks who accepted; [4] and on June 12, 1806, they were married by Jesse Head,[5] in the cabin of Richard Berry, close to Beechland in Washington County. Only one account of the wedding exists and that is extravagant and untrustworthy.[6] It is reasonable to suppose, however, that the event was attended and followed by that boisterous merriment with which such ceremonies then were and, for half a century, continued to be celebrated, particularly by those of the class to which Thomas and Nancy belonged — the over-eating, over-drinking, violent sports, coarse jests, rude fun.[7]

We next find husband and wife at Elizabethtown, seat of Hardin County, where they set up housekeeping in a cabin fourteen feet square off the main pathway through the village which

[1] Grigsby's statement. Weik MSS. Grigsby gives this account from what the neighbors said in Indiana in 1818–19. He himself could not have remembered her qualities even if he had opportunities to observe them.

[2] Chapman's narrative. Weik MSS.

[3] Thomas Lincoln himself said that he first courted Sarah Bush, who declined his proposal. Helm's statement, July 19, 1865. Weik MSS. Also *Life of Lincoln:* Henry C. Whitney, I, 12. Sarah Bush immediately married Daniel Johnston, March 13, 1806.

[4] The account of a camp-meeting at Elizabethtown, where a girl of the name of Hanks who was 'to be married next week' and a young man, went through emotional performances ending in an embrace before the altar, given in Herndon, I, 14, 15, could not have referred to Nancy Hanks, since in the Helm MS. from which the story is taken, the incident is stated to have occurred in 1816, ten years after her marriage to Thomas Lincoln.

[5] Head was a deacon in the Methodist Episcopal Church, ordained October 3, 1805, a Justice of the Peace, etc. For a careful account of Jesse Head see 'Life of Rev. Jesse Head' by L. S. Pence in *Lebanon* (Ky.) *Enterprise,* April, 1921–June, 1922.

[6] That of Christopher Columbus Graham, who was nearly one hundred years old when he made his statement, having been silent during the many years when the controversy as to the marriage was raging. See *Life of Abraham Lincoln:* William E. Barton, I, 17.

[7] *Pioneer Life in Kentucky:* Daniel Drake, 185–6. 'Weddings, commonly in the daytime, were scenes of carousal, and of mirth and merriment of no very chastened character.' The same occurred at the infare.

served as its principal street.[1] Although a frontier town, it was then the scene of energy, even of ambition. While by far the greatest number of the houses were still log cabins, yet many of these were comparatively large and some were of hewn logs.[2]

Two or three frame structures had gone up, a large brick residence, imposing for the time and place and not unworthy even now, had been built;[3] another residence of brick, two stories high, had 'marble steps' in front;[4] and there was another of wood, three stories in height with deep and massive foundations and understructure of stone.[5] A stone jail, expensive even for that day, and a new court house of brick were under construction;[6] and 'E-town,' as it was called, boasted a brick yard, a tannery, a distillery, and three stores,[7] one of them run by John J. Audubon, who later became the great ornithologist. There were three or four blacksmiths and gunsmiths;[8] a tailor and a shoe maker;[9] but Joseph Hanks appears to have been the only carpenter.

Several lawyers of signal ability and considerable learning had been admitted to the bar of Hardin County and some of them

[1] Haycraft to Herndon (no date). Weik MSS. Haycraft says that the house was 'removed three times, being used twice as a slaughter house and now [1865] as a stable.'

[2] 'Hewed logs gradually took the place of round log houses, with shingled roofs' — this before 1800. Haycraft, 74.

[3] This house, the residence of Major Ben Helm, was built in 1801–2. Haycraft's description of it is helpful to an understanding of Elizabethtown when Thomas Lincoln lived there: It was fifty by twenty-five feet, two stories high, the brick walls resting on 'huge stone' foundations with a 'deep cellar under the whole building.' The wainscoting was of 'seasoned black walnut,' and the mantelpieces, 'curiously wrought,' were also of black walnut. The plaster was 'more than one inch thick . . . and so well trowelled that a man could almost see his face in it.' Seventy years afterward 'the blue ash floors were nearly as perfect as when laid.' *Ib.*, 76.

[4] That of Major James Crutcher, the merchant. *Ib.*, 77.

[5] That of Samuel Haycraft, Sr. More than one hundred wagon loads of stone were required for the foundation and chimney of Haycraft's house, which was fourteen feet wide and forty feet high. It was built in 1798–9. At that time Elizabethtown had about 150 people. *Ib.*, 75.

[6] 'It was then considered to be a fine house, and the country flocked in to see it.' This court house was in use seventy years later. Haycraft, 28–9.

[7] Haycraft, 75–6; 92–3; 168–9. The stores of James Crutcher (*ib.*, 99–101), Blakely and Montgomery (*ib.*, 105), and Audubon & Rozier (*ib.*, 108). Charles Helm and Samuel Stevenson were early merchants in Elizabethtown and so were Major Ben Helm and Duff Green (*ib.*, 109), at one time a noted champion of Jackson and later as strong an advocate of Calhoun.

[8] *Ib.*, 165–6.

[9] *Ib.*, 73–4.

lived at the county seat.[1] All judges and county justices were Calvinistic Baptists and every one of them was a large land owner.[2] So many lawyers practiced at Elizabethtown that the court made a rule in 1812 that no more than two attorneys should appear on one side unless by special permission of the judges; [3] and one Justice of the Peace was fined five pounds and costs for charging 'high blooded fees.' [4] Strict indeed was the administration of justice; in one case a new trial was asked because the jury ate, drank, and danced during an intermission in the trial.[5] A school had been started by a Methodist preacher, who also was an excellent maker of chairs.[6] There was only one doctor, attendance upon the sick being still in the hands of the women of the household, whose simple remedies of hot herb teas, blanketing and sweating generally sufficed to relieve most ills.[7]

Religion flourished in Elizabethtown and, indeed, throughout Severns Valley. From the first settlement Baptist communities were established; [8] and, as early as 1799, the town had a church building of hewn logs which also served as a schoolhouse; and in 1805 Samuel Haycraft, Sr., gave an acre for a church and burying ground. Services were also held in the brick Court House and in many private houses, the fine residence of Major Helm, with whom the preachers always stopped, being a favorite place of worship.[9] But while in Elizabethtown, neither Thomas nor Nancy Lincoln became a church member.

The vigorous people of Hardin County were as prolific as they were godly, the average family numbering twelve children.

[1] By 1806, twenty-two lawyers had been admitted to the Hardin County bar. (Haycraft, 33–55.) Among these were Felix Grundy, afterwards Senator from Tennessee, Ninian Edwards, afterwards Governor of Illinois, Thomas B. Reed, afterwards Senator from Mississippi, Henry P. Brodnax, John Rowan, John Pope, Gabriel Johnson, Worden Pope, and Robert Wickliffe. Haycraft observes of certain lawyers who practiced at Elizabethtown when Thomas Lincoln lived there: 'Either of these men was far ahead in legal knowledge, statesmanship and administrative capacity of some of our Presidents.'

It was at the house of John Rowan near Bardstown that the song 'My Old Kentucky Home' was written. Rowan finally removed to Louisville and became one of the foremost lawyers of his time.

[2] *Ib.*, 31. [3] *Ib.*, 62. [4] *Ib.*, 39.
[5] *Ib.*, 54. [6] *Ib.*, 29. [7] *Ib.*, 151.

[8] 'No other orthodox denomination had a representation on these waters for many years after.' *Ib.*, 38.

[9] *Ib.*, 82–3.

They were sticklers for regular living, the early grand juries frequently presenting men for swearing, drunkenness, selling liquor without license; and often presenting women for having children 'without the necessary appendage of a husband.' Imprisonment for debt was inflicted [1] and many were punished for other offences in the stocks and thus exhibited in public.

While conditions were hearty, cordial, and democratic, divisions in society had already appeared. Costumes of the frontier still prevailed; but here and there among buckskin leggings, hunting shirts, coon-skin caps, and moccasins, were to be seen beaver hats, short breeches, stockings, low shoes, and silver buckles at knee and ankle; [2] and one man of pride and fashion, a lawyer, rode in careful attire, his negro servant following at the prescribed distance.[3] Another lawyer wore his hair powdered and tied behind.[4] There was a dancing-master, too, who also wore knee-breeches.[5]

Lexington, ninety miles distant, with more than three thousand population,[6] had become a centre of culture not surpassed by any town west of the Alleghenies, and was an emporium for books as well as merchandise.[7] There Major Helm went to buy

[1] Haycraft, 34, 44, 69, 175. [2] *Ib.*, 37.

[3] James Furgeson. 'He was a fine dressed man and traveled with a servant, in the style of that day, the servant at a respectable distance behind with a large portmanteau on the crupper, a glazed hat in his hand and a brace of horseman's pistols at the pommel.' *Ib.*, 58–9.

[4] Henry P. Brodnax, who dressed in 'white cassimere short breeches, silver knee buckles . . . and very fine cotton stockings,' and a long white ribbed dimity coat, the long skirts of which nearly touched the ground. *Ib.*, 178–9.

[5] *Ib.*, 74.

[6] Michaux: Thwaites, III, 199. Lexington then had tanyards, ropewalks, potteries, nail machines and powder mills, and there were many tailors, shoemakers, tinsmiths, masons and carpenters. *Ib.*, 200–3.

[7] In the *Kentucky Gazette*, published at Lexington, Parker Brothers advertised, May 30, 1789, forty items of dry goods among which were Irish linens, Scotch shirting, 'silk for gowns,' lawn and cotton, 'silk and thread lace,' 'garters and stay laces,' etc.; as many items of household utensils, such as knives and forks and carving knives, 'leather, paper and brass inkstands,' razors, 'crooked combs,' 'sugar tongs and nutmeg graters,' pins, needles, and all kinds of articles for stable and farm.

A large assortment of groceries, too, were for sale, as well as Bibles, hymn books and Watts' psalms, English and Dutch testaments, spelling books and primers, writing paper and playing cards, window glass, mirrors, china cups and saucers, tumblers and wine glasses, together with 'delf dishes assorted,' etc., and 'a variety of other articles too tedious to mention.' And in same issue see the advertisement, equally extensive, of Wilson and Parker, another firm.

wrought nails for the woodwork in his pretentious dwelling,[1] and there too, we may be sure, books were purchased by those ambitious for improvement. As early as 1792 a surprising number of volumes were advertised by Lexington merchants.[2] Bailey's *Etymological Dictionary* seems to have made a wide appeal, for Mordecai Lincoln bought one almost as soon as the stock of books was received;[3] and we shall hear of this volume many years later.[4] But Thomas Lincoln felt no such impulse for intellectual improvement; and since, as we have seen, neither he nor his wife could read, nor, at that time, so far as can be found, had either any wish or will to learn, it is not likely that any book then found a place beneath his 'E-town' rooftree.[5]

During the year of his marriage to Nancy Hanks and perhaps for some months before, Thomas Lincoln worked hard and steadily; indeed it may be said that he then reached the peak of his sluggish energy. He had credit at the village grocery, once paid a doctor's bill,[6] bought a 'bason,' dish and plates at an administrator's sale, paying about six dollars; and at the same time he spent three dollars for a sword,[7] though what use he had for a sword does not appear.[8] He did the carpentry on one

[1] Haycraft, 76.

[2] William Leavy advertised one hundred and twenty-one different titles. Among these were Vattel's *Law of Nations*, Horace, Virgil, Sallust, Ovid, Savary's *Greece*, Savary's *Egypt*, Burke's *Works*, Pope's *Iliad*, *Junius' Letters*, Aristotle's *Works*, Chesterfield's *Letters*, Paine's *The Rights of Man*, Ferguson's *Astronomy*, Nicholson's *Philosophy*, Blackstone's *Commentaries* and many other law books, as well as religious works, Bibles, testaments, reading and spelling books. Four dictionaries were for sale including Bailey's. *Kentucky Gazette*, July 27, 1793.

[3] This volume is now in the possession of Mr. James A. McMillen, Librarian of Washington University, St. Louis, Mo.

[4] Levi Hall brought this book to Indiana in 1826 and Abraham Lincoln wrote his name in it. P. 73, *infra*.

[5] It appears that the Lincolns did not have even a Bible until after the death of Nancy. P. 70, *infra*.

[6] This probably was later for an operation on himself.

At an unknown date Thomas Lincoln was ill of the mumps which must have resulted in an operation. Burba to Herndon, March 31, 1866; Friend to same, July 31, 1889; Hanks's second Chicago statement. Weik MSS. It is possible that it was for this that he employed the physician.

[7] Will and Inventory Book of Hardin County, 297.

[8] It has been suggested that he made a hunting or shaving knife out of the sword. This was possible, although he could have bought a good knife for less money at any store in Elizabethtown.

residence, and so well did he perform that task that his work was in good condition sixty years afterward.[1]

About the same time, however, he undertook a labor which, for him, was heavy, and which required skill and accuracy. Denton Geoghegan, a wealthy farmer of high repute,[2] had determined to build a mill and employed Thomas Lincoln to hew the timbers. Geoghegan was sharply dissatisfied with Lincoln's performance of the job and refused to pay the full amount demanded, because, as he said, the work was not done in a workmanlike manner, the timbers being neither square nor of proper length.

Such were the allegations made by Geoghegan in a law suit that resulted, which, first brought and won by Lincoln before a Justice of the Peace, was appealed to the County tribunal which affirmed the judgment. But Geoghegan would not yield, and, in his turn, sued Lincoln in the Circuit Court. Months afterward the dispute was settled by agreement between the two and the suit dismissed at plaintiff's costs.[3]

So ended Thomas Lincoln's only period of sustained and constructive effort. After a year and a half in Elizabethtown, where meanwhile a daughter had been born to him,[4] he took wife, child and the small household belongings and left forever the bustle and stir of village or town. He lived thenceforth on farms. Why he quitted the attractive community of Elizabethtown does not appear. Perhaps the pretensions of its society annoyed him, for both Thomas and Nancy Lincoln were 'the most humble and obscure in this humble class of people;'[5] perhaps

[1] That of Hardin Thomas. Haycraft, 123.

[2] Denton Geoghegan came to Elizabethtown in 1806 with his father, Ambrose Geoghegan, a graduate of an Irish College, who 'possessed considerable means, was an accomplished engineer and surveyor, . . . an accomplished gentleman and of social disposition' and very popular. Immediately after coming to Hardin County the family purchased several adjoining farms. *Ib.*, 126–7.

Thomas Lincoln's employer and antagonist 'was a large farmer . . . a remarkably clear-headed man, strictly honorable in all his dealings, and noted for his punctuality,' declares Haycraft, who knew Denton Geoghegan well. He became a Justice of the Peace and served as such for many years. The Geoghegan family was one of the most important and influential in Hardin County. *Ib.*, 126–30.

[3] Warren, 308, 309, 333.

[4] Sarah, born February 10, 1807. Waldo Lincoln, 342.

[5] Helm to Herndon, June 20, 1865. Weik MSS.

the gossip about the parentage of his wife was repellent to both; perhaps the intellectual ferment of the little but sprightly County seat bewildered him; perhaps his business as a carpenter was ruined by Geoghegan's talk and suit, for the angry miller pursued Lincoln, suing him after he had left the County seat, the settlement not being made until after the birth of his first son.

At any rate, about May, 1808, he went to live on a farm, but not the Mill Creek farm which he still owned, a circumstance which never has been explained. Instead he bought, at sixty-six and two-thirds cents per acre, three hundred acres on which stood the cabin by the Sinking Spring. This farm was much poorer than his two hundred acres on Mill Creek. It was about three miles south of Hodgen's mill, where the family grist was ground. Yet Thomas Lincoln did not at once proceed to the Sinking Spring farm — indeed he did not buy it until December, 1808. Where he passed the interval is in doubt.[1]

In November or December, however, they occupied the cabin by the Sinking Spring, where on February 12 of the following year, Abraham Lincoln came into the world.[2] Here they remained for perhaps four years, Thomas tilling a few acres, hunting, doing carpentering for other farmers. He kept one or two horses and for two years he was taxed on three horses.[3] Then, quite suddenly, he abandoned the Sinking Spring farm, seemingly because of a curious and wholly unexplained incident.

On December 12, 1808, Thomas Lincoln, for two hundred

[1] It has been stated that late in May, 1808, Lincoln, his wife, and daughter turned their backs upon Elizabethtown and went to the farm of George Brownfield, about seventeen miles from Elizabethtown, where, in a 'plum orchard' near Brownfield's log house, they occupied for some months a cabin or hut made of poles, and Lincoln did odd jobs of carpentry or other work about the farm. Judge R. W. Creal, a well-informed man of the locality, who has served in the Kentucky Legislature and as Judge in LaRue County, states that his father, who was nine years older than Abraham Lincoln, told him of this stay on the Brownfield farm. The tax list of 1812 shows that Brownfield had no real estate whatever in the county, only a number of horses. He may have been living on the 'plum orchard' place in 1808, but evidently he did not own it. Interview of the author with Judge Creal and information from Judge Mather. See *Paternity:* Barton, 189.

[2] Haycraft to Helm, July 5, 1865; Friend to Herndon, March 19, 1866; Burba to same, March 31, 1866. Weik MSS.

[3] 1808, 1 horse; 1809–10, 2 horses; 1811, 1 horse; 1812, 3 horses; 1813, 2 horses; 1814, 3 horses, Hardin County Tax Records.

dollars, had bought the Sinking Spring farm from Isaac Bush [1] who, on November 2, 1805, had for the same amount purchased the land from David Vance. On May 1, 1805, Vance had bought it from Richard Mather, a man of much importance in Hardin County and the owner of a considerable holding of fifteen thousand acres, of which this tract was a part.

Vance had paid Mather all of the purchase price but fifteen pounds, twelve shillings, four pence; and for this sum he gave Mather his promissory note, dated May 1, 1805, and due eighteen months after date 'in good trade.' At the same time Mather gave Vance an agreement to execute and deliver to Vance a warranty deed for the farm, when the remainder of the purchase price, as evidenced by the note, should be paid.

Under this incumbrance, the farm came into the possession of Thomas Lincoln, who fully understood the obligation to Mather and his lien upon the land. But Vance had removed to Mississippi leaving his note unpaid. So on September 1, 1813, Mather filed against Vance, a bill in equity alleging that he was a non-resident without other property in Kentucky and praying that the land be sold for the payment of Vance's note. Mather also averred that Bush and Lincoln (who throughout the bill and in the summons is called Linkhorn) [2] had bought the land as stated, with full knowledge of the facts and that they took it subject to Mather's 'equitable claim,' and asked that both Bush and Lincoln be made defendants.

September 7, 1813, Lincoln answered, admitting that when he bought the land he knew that Mather had a lien upon it as claimed; but that Lincoln had been told that Vance had paid part of his note to Mather; that he had offered to pay Mather the remainder which Mather agreed to accept; but that Mather had brought suit before Lincoln could 'make arrangements.' Lincoln said that he believed Mather brought suit only to get

[1] Son of Christopher Bush, Captain of the patrollers of whom Thomas Lincoln was one, and brother of Sarah Bush, Lincoln's second wife.

[2] 'they wer called Linkhorn that proves nothing as the old settlers had a way of pronouncing names as they pleasd they called Medcalf, Cap., Kaster, they pronounced Custard etc.' Friend to Herndon, March 19, 1866. Weik MSS.

Thomas Lincoln 'was always called Linkhorn.' Haycraft to Helm, July 5, 1865; Haycraft to Herndon, no date; Helm to same, June 20, 1865. Weik MSS.

cash 'for the amount of his trade note' and prayed that he be compelled to make a deed and 'to receive his pay in good trade.' [1] Bush answered to the same effect.[2] In his replication, filed the same day with Bush's answer, Mather denied the statements of Lincoln and Bush 'so far as they contradict' statements in Mather's bill of complaint.

Without waiting for trial and judgment, Thomas Lincoln left the Sinking Spring farm and, with his family of three, moved to his next place of abode, the third within six years. Some three years later, on December 19, 1816, the farm on which Abraham Lincoln was born was, under decree of the Court rendered September 12, 1816, sold to John Welsh for $61.50, the remainder of the debt due Mather, together with interest and costs, amounting in all to $87.74.[3]

It is this sacrifice for so small a sum of a farm for which he had paid two hundred dollars, on which Thomas Lincoln had lived for over four years and where two of his children had been born, that would seem to defy rational explanation, especially since he expressed his willingness to pay the amount still due Mather, which was only $61.50, and since his sale of the Mill Creek farm brought him one hundred pounds at that very time.

For, in the midst of this litigation, on October 27, 1814,

[1] To this answer Thomas made his mark, as he did also to an amended answer.

[2] September 18.

[3] Records Hardin County, Equity Papers, H.C.C. Bundle 24. In the same decree, it was provided that Thomas Lincoln 'recover of Bush the purchase money with interest from the day of payment' and that Bush recover the same from Vance.

It appears that Bush did not pay Lincoln, for on November 11, 1816, he made oath, before Samuel Carpenter, Justice of the Peace for Nelson County, to a cross-bill against Bush filed in the Hardin County Court, January 21, 1817, alleging his payment of $200 to Bush for the Sinking Spring farm and praying for judgment for that amount and costs, paying, as Carpenter notes, '$2.50 to pay the printer.'

At the same time Bush filed a like cross-bill against Vance, but failed to answer the cross-bill of Lincoln; and during the September term of the Court, 1817, a decree was rendered confirming the former decree in favor of Mather, adjudging that the cross-bill of Lincoln against Bush be taken as confessed because not answered, and that Lincoln recover of Bush 'the sum of $200.00 with interest thereon at the rate of six per cent per annum from the first day of January, 1809, till paid, and also his costs by him in said suit expended.' *Ib.*

The records do not show whether Bush satisfied this judgment; but it is probable that he did. Two years later, soon after the death of his first wife, Thomas Lincoln returned to Elizabethtown and married Sarah Johnston, the sister of Isaac Bush. See p. 57, *infra.*

Thomas Lincoln sold to Charles Melton for one hundred pounds, two hundred acres of his Mill Creek farm, this tract to be taken out of the two hundred and thirty-eight acres 'where he thinks proper.' [1] Thereupon Lincoln again removed to another farm about ten miles to the northeastward.[2] How he got this tract of thirty acres or how much he paid for it, if anything, has not been discovered; but he probably took possession under what was then called a 'title bond,' which was a written promise to convey land, a kind of contract for the sale of the property. Such instruments were not always recorded and it was by means of them that most lands were sold at that time. Only an equitable right was given which did not become a title until deed was executed and delivered.[3]

The surroundings of this third cabin home of the Lincoln family deserve careful description, for it was there that the early boyhood of Abraham Lincoln was spent and first impressions were received.

Some seven or eight miles north and east from the Sinking Spring farm, a tremendous stone escarpment called Muldraugh's Hill, divides the Barrens from the lower and heavily timbered land to the northward.[4] This vast cliff is pierced by a valley four miles in length and from one fourth of a mile to two miles broad. High hills, abrupt, and mountainous in appearance, rise on either side. Lengthwise through the valley a deep and rapid stream, Knob Creek, hurries to the Rolling Fork, a large stream at the valley end; and the Rolling Fork, in turn, flows into Salt River which empties into the Ohio.

From the gorges of the lofty elevations on either side of the valley smaller streams feed Knob Creek which has its rise in the

[1] Deed Book E, 193, Records Clerk's Office, Hardin County, Ky. To this deed Nancy Lincoln made her mark.

[2] On Knob Creek. The land is in Thomas Lincoln's name on the commissioners' Tax List for 1815.

[3] Judge O. M. Mather to author, August 9, 1924.

[4] Michaux describes Muldraugh's Hill as 'a steep and lofty mountain that forms a kind of amphitheatre. From its summit the neighbouring country presents the aspect of an immense valley [of the Rolling Fork, not the small space through which Knob Creek runs], covered with forests of an imperceptible extent, whence, as far as the eye can reach, nothing but a gloomy verdant space is seen, formed by the tops of the close-connected trees, and through which not the vestige of a plantation can be discerned.' Michaux: Thwaites, III, 213; Collins, II, 540.

cliffs that separate the valley from the higher land of the Barrens. For five hundred feet this eminence sharply falls to land and streams below; and the abutting hills, stretching out from the parent cliff like gnarled and knotted arms of a giant, are almost as imposing.[1]

Formed as it is of the silt carried from the surface of the hills, the product of decomposing vegetation throughout ages of time, the soil of this valley is extremely rich and productive. Some of the little triangles of land that project from Knob Creek into the hills on either side are not surpassed in fertility — the mere dropping of seed with the slightest cultivation suffices to yield a crop. In 1813, when Thomas Lincoln moved to Knob Creek from his sterile farm on the edge of the Barrens, the main stream and tributaries teemed with fish and the surrounding hills were full of game. A more ideal spot for the winning of a livelihood with the least possible exertion could not be found.

At the end of such a hollow projecting from Knob Creek into the cliff-like hills, two and one half miles from the Rolling Fork,[2] Thomas Lincoln set up his new home;[3] and there 'in abject poverty,'[4] he and his family lived for perhaps three years until, because of several circumstances, he once more removed. Seven miles southwest of his Knob Creek cabin, was Hodgen's mill, where Thomas Lincoln took his corn to be ground, although other grist mills were nearer to his cabin. There were thirty acres in the hill-enclosed triangle that Lincoln occupied. Not all of the small farm could be cultivated, however, since part of the thirty acres ran up into the encompassing hills. Dennis Hanks thus describes Lincoln's Knob Creek holding: 'The 30 acre farm in K[entuck]y was Knotty — Knobby — as a piece of land could be, with deep hollows and ravines, cedar trees covering the . . . Knobs as thick as trees could grow.'[5] At least half of the farm was on the bottom, for Thomas tilled fourteen acres

[1] Hanks's Charleston statement, Weik MSS., and personal inspection.

[2] Hanks to Herndon, no date, Weik MSS.

[3] Haycraft to Herndon, no date, Weik MSS.; J. M. Atherton to O. M. Mather, June 20, 1924, and Mather to author, July 24, 1924.

[4] Atherton to Mather, and Mather to author, July 24, 1924. Mr. Atherton says that his 'information came direct from Austin Gollaher,' the boyhood companion of Lincoln.

[5] Hanks's second Chicago statement. Weik MSS.

'running up and down the branch about 40 feet on either side.' [1] His cabin was much like the one by the Sinking Spring.[2]

This valley was comparatively well settled, and neighbors were more numerous and not so distant as had been the case in the region of the Sinking Spring.[3] Sometime during the sojourn of the Lincoln family on Knob Creek a school was opened in the vicinity by one Zachariah Riney, a Catholic; [4] and Sarah accompanied by her little brother went to this school for a few weeks. Later another school, taught by one Caleb Hazel,[5] was attended by the Lincoln children for an even briefer period.

'It was from that place [Knob Creek cabin],' writes Haycraft to Herndon, 'that young Abraham commenced trugging his way to school to Caleb Hazel with whom I was well acquainted and could perhaps teach spelling, reading and indifferent writing and perhaps could cypher to the Rule of three — but he had no other qualification of a teacher except large size and bodily strength to thrash any boy or youth that came to his School.' [6]

Humble indeed was the appearance of these children of the poverty burdened pioneers, Abraham being clad in 'a one piece

[1] Hanks's Charleston statement. Weik MSS.

[2] 'I've been at the cabin in my boyhood which had then tumbled down. . . . Judging by the ruins of the Knob Creek Lincoln cabin, it was about the size of the one he [Abraham] was born in.' Atherton to Mather, June 20, 1924, and Mather to author, July 24, 1924.

[3] This is the opinion of Judge O. M. Mather, who has made careful and extended study of the early history of Hardin County, particularly of that part which is now LaRue County. For an excellent account of Muldraugh's Hill and the settlement of the adjacent country, see 'Explorers and Early Settlers South of Muldraugh's Hill,' by Otis M. Mather, Hodgenville, Ky., in *Reg. Ky. Hist. Socy.*, XXII, No. 64, 19–39.

[4] This Riney was probably one of a colony of Catholic emigrants that settled on Pottinger's Creek in 1785, some of whom joined the settlement on Cartwright's Creek. See *Centenary of Catholicity in Kentucky:* Benjamin J. Webb, 80.

[5] 'He went to school . . . a short time to a man by the name of Riney and . . . to another by the name of Caleb Hazle. The latter I think was some eight miles from here [Hodgenville] where his father moved to near . . . Atherton's ferry [on Knob Creek].' Burba to Herndon, March 31, 1866. Weik MSS.

'Mr. A. L. Went to Two School Masters Calib Hazle and one Riney. Hazle taught on my Grand Father's farm and to get to the school House he had to go some 2½ miles.' Friend to Herndon, March 19, 1866. Weik MSS.

[6] Haycraft to Herndon, no date, Weik MSS. Hazel also kept an inn or 'ordinary' at his house on Knob Creek. Hardin County Court Order Book. Prices of food and lodging were fixed by the County Court. These were 7½ pence for ½ pint of whisky, dinner 1 shilling 6 pence, lodging for one night 3 pence, stabling and hay 1 shilling six pence, etc. Some taverns were authorized to sell half pints of whiskey for 6 pence. Haycraft, 20.

long linsey shirt' without other garments, since school was held only in warm weather.[1] Three months, at best, was the extent of the instruction the girl and boy thus received.[2] These schools, like all others at that time, were subscription affairs, a very small charge being made for each child taught. But, admits Dennis Hanks, 'Abe had no books in Ky.'[3]

Abraham's experiences on Knob Creek were, however, of far greater value than any premature schooling could have been. Lovely and noble were his surroundings, perfect and healthful conditions. The steep and rocky heights that rose from the yard of the Lincoln cabin and all about the valley, were clad with majestic trees, mostly of cedar,[4] two and more feet in diameter, their crests from seventy to a hundred feet above the earth. Clear as light was the water of the streams — so clear that through them pebbles in deep pools could be seen as plainly as on the surface of the ground.[5]

There was no bustle of hurrying people, no noise, no tumult, no distraction. It was a place of peace, calm, silent, and serene. A still and tranquil grandeur was the most intimate companion with which destiny supplied Abraham Lincoln at the time of his first impressions of life and the world. Yet it does not appear that he sought solitude or was in any way peculiar. While recollections of him at that time are, of course, indistinct and to be received with caution, he was, by vague accounts, much like other boys.

One of his companions remembers that Abraham and he went hunting together and cornered a ground hog in a cliff whence young Lincoln was determined to dislodge him.[6] Another re-

[1] Austin Gollaher's statement to Atherton, by him to Judge O. M. Mather, June 20, 1924, and by Mather to author, July 24, 1924.

[2] 'Lincoln went to school about 3 mo[nths] — with his sister — all the Education he had in Ky.' Hanks's second Chicago statement. Weik MSS.

[3] Hanks's second Chicago statement. Weik MSS. Yet Dennis says at another place in the same statement that Lincoln's mother taught him and his sister their Abc's out of Webster's old spelling book and also taught him to read the Bible, although the Lincolns had no Bible until two years after their removal to Indiana.

[4] Hanks's second Chicago statement. Weik MSS.

[5] Knob Creek 'is one of the prettiest streams I ever Saw. You can see a pebble in 10 foot water.' Burba to Herndon, May 25, 1866. Weik MSS.

[6] Rev. John Duncan's account to Charles Friend; Friend to Herndon, March 19, 1866, Aug. 20, 1889. Weik MSS.

calls that he fished Abraham out of the creek where he had fallen from a log. The boys 'had no settled games,' says this narrator, but mostly spent their time climbing the precipitous hills and high trees, though 'Lincoln took a delite in excelling' in anything his companions did.[1] Dennis Hanks declares that: 'Abe used to go with me . . . to shoot fish in puddles and holes washed by the water — killed a fawn — Abe was tickled to death — Abe exhibited no special trait in K[entuck]y except a good, kind somewhat wild nature.' [2]

All that the careful Burba could learn fifty years later was that at school, Abraham was quiet, considerate, and 'the one to adjust difficulties between Boys of his size;' had no fights although considered brave; and 'was rather noted for keeping his clothes cleaner longer than any others,' not a difficult task, one would think, since he had only a one-piece covering to care for. He liked to fish and hunt 'with his dog and axe,' and 'when his dog would run a Rabbit in a hollow tree he would chop it out.' [3] Haycraft dimly recalls that 'Abraham was a tall spider of a boy and had his due proportion of harmless mischief.' [4]

Boyish pranks were played, some of them unpleasing in the extreme,[5] a circumstance not to be overlooked in view of the curious inclination toward relating such things which became so striking and inconsistent a feature of Lincoln's mature years. But, hill, stream, forest were stamped indelibly on the boy's mind. When President, he described the country of his birth and boyhood [6] to Dr. J. H. Rodman of Hodgenville, inquired after the neighbors of that time, named them — the Cessnas,

[1] Austin Gollaher's story to Friend, Friend to Herndon, March 19, 1866. Weik MSS. The stories of both Duncan and Gollaher have been doubted, but they give the usual experiences of boyhood.

[2] Hanks's Charleston statement, Weik MSS. It was here that Herndon got his first warning as to the credibility of Dennis. On margin of Herndon's MS. is this note: 'Hon. O. B. Ficklin [Representative in Congress from Charleston] and others told me to be careful about what Hanks said.'

[3] Burba to Herndon, March 31, 1866. Weik MSS.

[4] Haycraft to Herndon, Dec. 7, 1866. Weik MSS.

[5] One of these Lincoln, when President, recounting incidents in Knob Creek, told with glee to Dr. J. H. Rodman. Friend to Herndon, August 20, 1889. Weik MSS.

[6] 'He [Lincoln] seemed to know more about the general topography of the County than any person he ever saw, described e[ve]ry house and farm hill creek and family that lived there when he was a boy.' *Ib.*

the Brownfields, the Friends, the Ashcrafts, the Kirkpatricks, and particularly about 'my old friend and playmate Austin Gollaher' whom I 'would rather see than any man living.' [1] He 'asked about an old stone house that stands on Nolin Creek about 1½ miles east of Hodgenville near a spring where the young people used to hold their dances.' [2] His recollection of the Kirkpatrick stone house shows that when living on Knob Creek the boy Abraham must have seen it often; and this is best explained on the theory that, young as he was, Abraham sometimes took the family grist to be ground at Hodgen's mill,[3] the road to which passes directly in front of this then noticeable residence.

Although Kentucky fairly blazed with martial spirit from before the beginning of our second conflict with Great Britain, and numbers of volunteers [4] surely trod the road in front of the Lincoln cabin, both on their way to the front and back home after the war was over, it would seem that little if any impression was made on Thomas or Nancy Lincoln; Abraham could remember the smallest things about Knob Creek and vicinity; but all that he could recall concerning the War of 1812 was that his mother told him to be good to a soldier and the boy accordingly gave him a fish.[5]

[1] It was of a prank of Gollaher and Lincoln that the President told Dr. Rodman.

[2] Friend to Herndon, August 20, 1889. Weik MSS. This stone house still stands, no humble structure even now; and near by a spring gushes conspicuously from the hillside. In Lincoln's boyhood, it was the home of Joseph Kirkpatrick, a wealthy farmer and member of the South Fork Baptist Church.

[3] Robert Hodgen then ran a saw mill as well as a grist mill, at a place in the present town of Hodgenville. An excellent account by O. M. Mather, of Robert Hodgen and the town that bears his name, will be found in the *LaRue County News*, April 1, 8, 15, 22, 1920.

[4] 'The popular passion for the war blazed with fury. . . . Seven thousand volunteers at once [upon declaration of war] offered their services.' Collins, I, 298. Hardin County was as hot for war as any part of Kentucky. John Thomas, Major General of the Kentucky Militia who enlisted for the New Orleans campaign, lived within four miles of the Sinking Spring cabin, where Thomas Lincoln was at the outbreak of hostilities. See Mather, *Reg. Ky. Hist. Socy.*, Jan., 1924, 34. Many of Lincoln's neighbors also enlisted. Mather to author, Sept. 1, 1924.

[5] Nicolay and Hay, I, 27. Yet Dennis Hanks says that when the soldiers came home from the war Thomas Lincoln 'fed and cared for them by companies.' He was able to do this because he lived in a 'double cabin with a passage . . . between.' Hanks's second Chicago statement, Weik MSS. Since Lincoln, although recalling the fish incident, could not remember anything about this lavish entertainment, and since the

In the autumn of 1816 Thomas Lincoln again sought another abiding place, this time beyond the Ohio. Financial chaos had stricken Kentucky,[1] but this could not have troubled Lincoln, since his small dealings were mostly by barter, 'good trade,' as the frontier expression was.[2] Yet in spite of the monetary derangement, the State was throbbing with civic activity. Roads were being made, bridges built,[3] and water transportation encouraged.[4] New counties were being formed from the old ones, courts established, legal procedure facilitated;[5] for population had swollen vastly since Thomas Lincoln had gone to Hardin County and especially since his marriage to Nancy Hanks.

The influx of settlers which so impressed observers from 1780 until 1790 was but an advance guard to the hosts that poured over the mountains after Aaron Burr's picturesque adventure in 1806 had advertised the 'Western Country'; and this became nothing less than a folk movement when the War of 1812 released the energies of the youthful and the daring. By 1816 full half a million people were in Kentucky and more were coming.[6]

cabin was a small one of one room, it is certain that Hanks was indulging his fancy. This is a good illustration of his inaccuracy when magnifying the Lincolns. Hanks also says in this statement that Lincoln was born in this Knob Creek cabin.

[1] Collins, I, 317–8. Money was poor as it was scarce, and, to help hard pressed debtors, relief laws were passed. Spanish milled dollars, which slowly succeeded coonskins and other articles as a medium of exchange, were still, in practical effect, the only specie. Kentucky merchants took them to Philadelphia and purchased goods with the product of recoinage. *Ib.*, 246x. And see Haycraft, 98–9. Even cut silver was 'extremely scarce.' Michaux: Thwaites, III, 204–5.

A few years earlier (1802) Michaux records that 'I have seen convoys of this kind that consisted of fifteen or twenty horses.' Paper currency was so generally counterfeited, that the people often refused to take even bills of the Bank of the United States. *Ib.*, 204.

[2] Even at Lexington as late as 1802 most business was done by barter. *Ib.*, 203.

[3] Money for these was raised mostly by lotteries. See *Acts of Kentucky:* 1810, 36–7, 145–6, 153–4; 1811, 58–9; 1812, 21, 37, 41–2; 1814, 310–6, 307–8; 1815, 524–5, 529–31, 611.

[4] *Acts of Kentucky*, 1815, 607–10, 585–6. In 1816 a Steamboat Company was authorized. *Ib.*, 538–41.

[5] At that time most of the laws were, of course, devoted to courts and legal rights, remedies of procedure. The legislation of the period was directed to the fundamentals of the establishment of regular methods and orderly society.

[6] 406,511 in 1810 and 564,317 in 1820. Compare this with 73,677 in 1790. Collins, II, 259. The land laws were modified in 1804, making easier terms of purchase and thus encouraging settlement.

Hardin County alone had between eight and ten thousand inhabitants.[1]

And this, to Thomas Lincoln, crowded population was demanding the improvements of civilized life. Everywhere schools were being opened, seminaries and academies established.[2] Library associations were being incorporated,[3] books thus being brought within the reach of every seeker after knowledge. Here and there authority to pave streets of ambitious towns was being given by the Legislature,[4] and fire insurance companies were chartered.[5] Altogether Kentucky was the scene of notable intellectual, moral, and commercial advancement in the autumn of 1816. Her vigorous, aggressive people were developing modern society, building a state.

What effect all this had on Thomas Lincoln and his wife can only be conjectured, although, in the light of their former movements and the one now to be made, it would seem to be reasonably certain that the civic and social ferment going on about them was not to their liking. As elsewhere south of the Ohio slavery had increased in Kentucky, but we now know that this fact had nothing whatever to do with the family's removal from that State. Not the faintest evidence has been found indicating that slavery was so much as a contributing cause for their departure;[6] indeed it is doubtful whether that institution made any impression, one way or another, on Thomas Lincoln's pallid mind.

[1] 7,531 in 1810 and 10,498 in 1820. *Ib.*, 258.

[2] *Acts of Kentucky*, 1811, 61, 126–8; 1812, 64–6; 1813, 133–5, 145–6, 149–51, 182–3, 203–6; 1814, 282–5, 309. As early as 1806 a female academy, one of the first in the United States, was established at Paris, Ky., and from the beginning had from 150 to 300 students. Kentucky Annals in Collins, I, 26.

[3] For examples, at Winchester, *Acts of Kentucky*, 1810, 12; at Washington, *ib.*, 136–9; Washingtonian and Versailles, 128–34; Frankfort, *ib.*, 1811, 141–2; 1814, 285–8.

[4] *Acts of Kentucky*, 1812, 22; 1814, 258–9.

[5] *Ib.*, 1810, 107–11; 1811, 167; also *Statutes of Kentucky*, III, 25.

[6] 'It is said in the Biographies that Mr. Lincoln left the State of K[entuck]y because . . . slavery was there. This is untrue. He moved to better his condition to a place where he could buy land for his Children and others for $1.25 per acre. Slavery did not operate on him. I know too well this whole matter.' Hanks's second Chicago statement; also Hanks to Herndon, March 7, 1866. Weik MSS.

'I have never heard that slavery was any cause of his leaving Ky — and think quite likely it was not — for there were very few slaves in the whole country round here [Hodgenville, then Hodgen's mill] then perhaps not 50 in what is now this County'

He had seen slaves all his life, had supervised them as patroller. But teeming population and all that went with it were new to husband and wife. Then too, his brother, Josiah, seems to have tired of changing conditions in Kentucky, for he had already gone to Harrison County, Indiana,[1] and there is a tradition that he influenced his younger brother to follow him. Doubtless Thomas would have done so in any case, seeking like his ancestors the rainbow's ever receding end.[2]

But another incident, more definite, more disturbing had stronger effect. Suits in ejectment were brought by non-residents of Kentucky claiming title to Kentucky lands, among which were the fertile acres of the Knob Creek Valley; and several of the small farmers of the region were made defendants, among them Thomas Lincoln.[3] Plain must have been such a case to have had the smallest chance of success, overwhelming and undisputed the proof. Not only the statutes of Kentucky favored the settlers who lived upon and worked their lands, but

[LaRue]. Burba to Herndon, March 31, 1866. Weik MSS. On the other hand the controversy on slavery in the South Fork Church, mentioned p. 37, *infra*, is not without significance.

Burba adds a view of his own as to the reason for the Lincolns leaving Kentucky: 'My own opinion is that, if it is true that the Hanks family were a little unfortunate, he [Thomas Lincoln] had no desire to remain where it was so well known and being of a stout hearty robust constitution broke out to try some unknown parts. This is my own conjecture.'

[1] Waldo Lincoln, 330.

[2] In 1860, forty-six years after the removal to Indiana, Abraham Lincoln said that the family left Kentucky partly because of slavery, but chiefly on account of the confusion in land titles. Autobiography. We now know that these were not the reasons for the migration.

[3] Order Book E, Hardin Circuit Court, 299. The suits were filed Feb. 12, 1816, by Thomas Stout, Hannah Rhodes and Abraham Sheridan against Thomas Lincoln, Isaac and Jesse LaFollette, William Brownfield, Clark Tucker, Peter Minges, Job Dye, William Ash, George Redman [or Redmond] and Ignatius Strange, 'tenants in possession.'

On June 11, 1816, George Lindsey (*ib.*, 336) and Thomas Lincoln (*ib.*, 361), by separate attorneys, made answer, joined issue and a jury was ordered.

By order of court (Order Book E, 367) the land was surveyed, and depositions taken (*ib.*, 387). Then came continuances and other survey orders (*ib.*, 450; Order Book F, 59, 92, 158, 255) — all continuances at cost of the plaintiffs. These proceedings ran into the summer of 1818 when, on June 9, the jury found for the defendant farmers with costs against plaintiffs (*ib.*, 301–2); which costs were, however, finally assessed against the defendants (*ib.*, 303, 328–34, 338). Only the Lincoln and Lindsey cases were tried in Hardin County; the other cases were transferred to Nelson County. The decrees for the defendants in the Hardin County cases controlled the other cases.

they had on their side the militant sympathy of juries, the favor of judges.[1] So, after many continuances, the defendants won.

At first, Thomas Lincoln resolved to defend his occupancy, his attorney being Worden Pope, than whom there then was 'no better "land lawyer" in that part of Kentucky.' [2] But very soon, even before depositions were taken, he sold his interest in the little Knob Creek farm, it is said, for a quantity of whisky,[3] resolving to leave forever Kentucky's contentious soil; and made off to find another dwelling place beyond the great river and in the crudest, loneliest spot then to be found within a week's journey. If consulted at all, Nancy Lincoln readily agreed to go. She appears to have accepted her lowly state in life as fixed and irrevocable,[4] and was very humble, unprotesting, thankful for a friendly word or act.[5] Indeed no family in all Kentucky was more obscure; those who lived near by took no notice of the Lincolns.[6]

Thomas Lincoln must suddenly have made up his mind to leave, for on May 13, 1816, he was ordered by the court to see that the short road through the Knob Creek Valley from Muldraugh's Hill to the Rolling Fork [7] was kept in repair. Perhaps

[1] Kentucky Courts disposed of these cases rapidly; 'perhaps fifty judgments would be rendered in one hour.' Haycraft, 64.

[2] Mather to author, July 24, 1924. 5166

[3] Hanks's second Chicago statement. Weik MSS. 'Mr. Lincoln got $300 [for the farm of thirty acres] and took it in whiskey.' *Ib.*

If Hanks is at all right about the selling price, $300 would have purchased several barrels of whisky considering the low price of it, even at the greatly depreciated value of Kentucky currency at that time. The fact would seem to have been that Thomas Lincoln bartered his few acres in a hollow of the hills for what he could get for them. Whisky represented something of value, of small bulk, it was more easily transported, and it served as a medium of exchange.

[4] *Lincoln:* Whitney, I, 13.

[5] 'Mrs. Lincoln now and then visited the McDougals after the birth of Abe. She was always plainly clad and received any kindness with gratitude. This I heard from my McDougal kin.' Atherton to Mather, June 20, 1924.

[6] 'I knew several families . . . who lived not far off where Abe was born . . . and I never heard the name of Lincoln mentioned by these old people. Not until after he was nominated in 1860 did I hear the family referred to.' *Ib.*

'Had not the Boy turned out to be what he did . . . his family record would scarce ever have been thought of here.' Burba to Herndon, March 31, 1866. Weik MSS.

'The Lincoln Family at that day cut no considerable figure.' Same to same, May 25, 1866. Weik MSS.

[7] The order was 'that Thomas Lincoln be and he is hereby appointed surveyor of that part of the road leading from Nolin to Bardstown which lies between the Bigg

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the order of the court may have quickened his decision; he had no taste for public service, even the humblest; and while the duties of road 'surveyor,' as it was called, were slight and without pay, they would have laid some additional burden on Lincoln's reluctant shoulders.[1]

At sometime during this eventful year Thomas Lincoln became a member of a congregation of 'Separate' Baptists known as the Little Mount Church, and was baptised in Knob Creek by the Rev. William Downs,[2] probably during the summer or early fall. The church was about five miles distant from the Lincoln cabin. Thus spiritually equipped he made ready for his journey.[3]

hill [Muldraugh's] and the Rolling Fork in place of George Redman and that all the hands that assisted said Redman to assist said Lincoln in keeping said road in repair.' Records in office of Hardin County.

[1] See *Statutes of Kentucky*, Act of February 16, 1808, 459. A road 'surveyor' was required to keep in order the road designated by the court, and for that purpose to notify persons living along the route to turn out and work the road. This legal requirement was continued in many states until long after the Civil War. It was a kind of tax, very unpopular and to be avoided, much like service on juries. The man ordered to oversee a road was considered unlucky.

The Kentucky law under which Thomas Lincoln was designated was rather severe. The sheriff was fined for failure to serve the order of the court on the road surveyor or even failure to execute the order; and the surveyor fined from $2.50 to $10 for failure 'to perform his duty agreeably to law.'

It is said that he then owned four horses, one a stallion. It does not appear what he could have done with so many horses on a thirty acre farm, part of which was steep cliffs and only fourteen acres of which were under cultivation; nor yet how he fed the horses under such circumstances during the winter months. There was another Thomas Lincoln, uncle of Thomas of Knob Creek, to whom the horses taxed under that name could have belonged. Certainly such equine opulence, even assuming that the money value of the animals was small, cannot be adjusted to the facts of Thomas Lincoln's condition then or thereafter.

[2] Thomas Lincoln 'joined the Free will Baptist Church in Hardin C[ount]y, Ky., in 1816, and was imersed by a preacher named William Downs in Knob Creek.' Chapman's second narrative. Weik MSS.

Thomas Lincoln and his wife 'belonged to the Little Mount Church . . . he was baptised in the Rolling Fork.' Friend to Herndon, March 19, 1866. Weik MSS.

Chapman is the better authority since he got his information directly from Thomas Lincoln.

Rev. William Downs was a 'Separate Baptist' and his congregation was doubtless of that order. The minutes of the South Fork Baptist Church, which was more 'regular,' show that Downs in 1812 was not to be invited to preach in the South Fork meeting house nor in the houses of members of the congregation. Judge Mather has found that Lincoln's teacher, Caleb Hazel, and Mary Stevens were married in Hardin County by William Downs, October 15, 1816, so that Downs was certainly a neighbor of the Lincolns.

[3] This belated joining church is one of the welter of strange incidents in Thomas

On the Rolling Fork, two and one half miles from his cabin, he built a rude flat-boat or raft of poplar logs [1] and taking his barrels of whisky, his tools and 'other effects' floated to Salt River and thence to the Ohio.[2] While on the first named stream the clumsy raft spilled whisky and tools, presumably near shore, for he managed to get on board again all the whisky, but lost most of the tools.[3] And so, he drifted across and down the Ohio to a landing on the Indiana bank, like a piece of human flotsam thrown forward by the surging tide of immigration, the black and prodigious depths of mighty woods before him.

Lincoln's life. When in Elizabethtown he could have become a Baptist. While on the Sinking Spring farm he could have joined the South Fork Baptist Church which was only about two miles from his cabin; or he could have become a member of the Nolin Baptist Church which was between three and four miles away.

Another curious circumstance is that some of the acquaintances and relatives of Thomas and Nancy Lincoln belonged to the nearby South Fork Church as shown by the records of that congregation. Isaac and Jesse Friend were members and so was 'Caty' Friend. Jesse Friend was the husband of Mary Hanks, whom he had married in Hardin County, December 16, 1795. In 1808–10 there was a schism in this church over the slavery question. I am indebted for these facts to Judge O. M. Mather of Hodgenville, Ky., who has the records of the South Fork Church.

[1] Hanks's second Chicago statement, and Friend to Herndon, March 19, 1866. Weik MSS.

[2] Hanks's second Chicago statement. Weik MSS.

[3] Hanks's second Chicago statement. Weik MSS. Not the Ohio, as generally stated.

CHAPTER II

INDIANA: BOYHOOD AND YOUTH

New birth of our new soil, the first American. LOWELL.

'WHEN, on the barren peak of some rocky hill, you catch a distant view, it generally is nothing but an undulating surface of impenetrable forest,' wrote Elias Pym Fordham in his diary, when making his way through southwestern Indiana, early in 1818. As was the case with all travellers, Fordham was depressed by the thick and sombre woods, for he complains that 'it is seldom that a view of two hundred yards in extent can be caught in Indiana,' because 'Indiana is a vast forest . . . just penetrated in places by backwoods settlers who are half hunters, half farmers.' [1]

Vast, forbidding, tremendous, this mighty forest stretched northward from the Ohio, its trees, like giant sentinels of nature, guarding the wilderness. Sycamore, oak, elm, willow, hackberry, poplar, sugar-maple, ash, sweet-gum, hickory, beech, walnut,[2] grew as thickly as their great size would permit. In 1819 Welby measured an oak in southwestern Indiana and found it to be twenty-four feet in circumference four feet above the ground; and he remarks that there were many others even larger.[3] Thick grapevines wove a net among the trees.[4]

Michaux records that, in southern Ohio a few years earlier, he measured a tulip poplar which was forty-seven feet in circumference. As late as 1833, Hugh McCulloch found Indianapolis to be a mere village 'in the heart of a magnificent forest,' and, on the road to Fort Wayne which was only an opening 'through the

[1] *Personal Narrative of Travels*, etc.: Elias Pym Fordham, 96, 152–3. Also see 'History of the English Settlement in Edwards Co. Ill.': George Flower, 52. *Chicago Hist. Socy. Coll.*, I.

[2] Dennis Hanks to Herndon, Jan. 6, 1866; Mrs. Elizabeth Crawford to same, May 3, 1866; J. W. Whartman to same, June, 1866. Weik MSS.

[3] 'A Visit to North America': Adlard Welby, Thwaites, XII, 230.

[4] 'The Journal of a Tour,' etc.: Thaddeus Mason Harris, Thwaites, III, 359. This traveller tells of grapevines 'nine inches in diameter' which 'spread a canopy over the summits of the highest trees.'

woods,' estimated that many of the trees were nearly one hundred feet in height. David Turpie records that in his boyhood the boles rose from fifty to eighty feet without a branch; and a Methodist circuit-rider testifies that in 1823 the woods in Ohio were so thick that sunlight could not get through the dense foliage.[1] As late as 1850 the country near Logansport, Indiana, as described by a resident, was 'nothing but woods, woods, woods, as far as the world extends!' [2]

In 1816 these forests were full of animals — raccoon, squirrel, opossum, skunk, deer, bear, wolf, wildcat, panther. Wild turkeys ran through underbrush filled with grouse and quail; wild ducks and geese flew overhead. Incredible numbers of pigeons hid the sun, 'darkening the air like a thick passing cloud' and, when settling for the night, broke down stout branches of trees. Swarms of mosquitoes rose from dank, stagnant pools and noisome swamps; large black and poisonous yellow flies abounded. Innumerable frogs rasped the stillness.[3]

The advancing tide of settlement had poured more than five hundred thousand people into Kentucky and nearly as many into Ohio; and the overflow had deposited in small and scattered communities, chiefly lying on the rivers, some sixty-four thousand persons. With this population Indiana was about to be admitted to the Union when Thomas Lincoln landed at the farm of Francis Posey.[4] Fewer people had penetrated this sec-

[1] Michaux: Thwaites, III, 175; *Men and Measures of Half a Century,* Hugh McCulloch, 70–1, 79; *Sketches of my Own Times:* David Turpie, 19. Also *Early Indiana Trials; Sketches:* O. H. Smith, 79; *Reminiscences of Levi Coffin,* 81–2. See especially *Pioneer History of Indiana:* William M. Cockrum; *A Western Pioneer:* Rev. Alfred Brunson, I, 276–8. See also *Some Recollections of my Boyhood:* Brandon L. Harris, 31–2.

[2] *In my Youth:* Robert Dudley, 8.

[3] Hanks to Herndon, March 22, 1866; David Turnham to same, Feb. 21, 1866. Also Hanks's Chicago and Charleston statements. Weik MSS. *Sketches of Things and People in Indiana:* Rev. Aaron Wood, 11; 'Two Years Residence': John Woods, Thwaites, X, 249; Faux's 'Journal,' Thwaites, XI, 236–7; Hulme's 'Journal,' July 5, 1819, near French Lick, Indiana, Thwaites, X, 63; Brunson, I, 276–8; Hanks to Herndon, May 4, 1866. Weik MSS. See especially Cockrum, 427–57, 504, 506.

[4] Francis Posey had, April 17, 1811, entered land in Township 5 S., Range 4 W. and section 29, a township later to be named Huff. A ferry from Kentucky to Anderson Creek, Indiana, is known to have been in existence before Lincoln's coming, and by that means the passage was made and probably up Anderson's Creek until Posey's place was reached. From Posey's farm the direction to Lincoln's land would be almost west.

tion than any other part of the southern quarter of the new State — hardly more than one adult white man to every four square miles, and, counting women and children and youths under twenty-one, a little over one human being to each square mile.[1]

Into this abode of gloom and solitude, Thomas Lincoln made his slow and toilsome way in mid-autumn of 1816. Leaving his whisky and remaining tools with some one at Posey's on the river's bank [2] and taking only his axe and hunting-knife, he struggled inward, cutting a way, now and then, through the thick and tangled underbrush.

Sixteen miles he journeyed and, at last, having reached the vicinity of a scattered cluster of other dwellers in the fastnesses,[3] chose a place to which to bring his family. Upon a knoll surrounded by marshy land, culture fields of malaria,[4] he decided to start life anew — his fourth venture since he had married Nancy Hanks ten years before. 'I will jest Say to you that it was the Brushes [brushiest] Cuntry that I have Ever Seen in any New Cuntry, . . . all Kinds of under groth Spice wo[o]d . . . Shewmake Dogwood grape Vines Matted to-Geather So that as the old Saying goes you could Drive a Butcher Knife up to the Handle in it,' wrote Dennis Hanks who went there the following year.[5] Perchance the trees on the little hill were fewer, as sometimes was the case with these elevations.

A curious circumstance distinguished Thomas Lincoln's selection of his future home — strange because other settlers had chosen tracts not greatly superior to his, but every one had

[1] In the region which now comprises Warrick, Spencer and Vanderburg counties, Indiana, there were by the end of 1815, 285 'white males over twenty-one years of age' Including women and children, the total population was but 1415. Census of Warrick County, Dec. 4, 1815, as given in *Warrick and its Prominent People:* Will Fortune, 15.

[2] Hanks to Herndon, March 7, 1866. Weik MSS.

[3] Perhaps seven families. *Ib.* Six families, two or three miles apart, were considered to be a good settlement as late as 1815. Cockrum, 459.

[4] Nicolay and Hay, I, 30. 'The country was . . . swampy.' Hanks's second Chicago statement. Weik MSS.

[5] Hanks to Herndon, March 22, 1866. Also Jan. 6, 1866; and David Turnham to Herndon, Feb. 21, 1866. Weik MSS. And see *Recollections:* Harris, 20–1.

built his cabin near a spring or stream. Water at hand was the first essential of the pioneer family.[1]

Lincoln overlooked this requisite, for the supply of drinking water nearest the knoll selected by him was a spring more than a mile away; and no brook ran closer. Little Pigeon Creek was slightly less distant,[2] but not so accessible as the spring; and the pools left by rains were as unhealthful as they were inconvenient. As wells were not successful on his land, seepage into holes dug for the purpose was the only other source of water for drinking and cooking, a fact that later caused Lincoln much labor and annoyance.[3]

Roughly marking by brush heaps the tract he proposed to occupy, Thomas Lincoln returned to Kentucky to bring his family to their new wilderness home.[4] Memory of the loss of the Sinking Spring farm, or rather, of the two hundred dollars which he had paid Isaac Bush for it, still dully smouldered within his breast, it appears; for, as we have seen, late as the season already was, he went to Nelson County and, on November 17, 1816, made oath to a cross bill against Bush, demanding judgment for the amount.

Not earlier, then, than the approach of December, 1816, the Lincoln family started for the Indiana solitudes. Two horses bore husband, wife, and children as well as household belongings. Upon one horse rode the father, his little son mounted behind him; on the other horse was Nancy Lincoln, with their nine-year old daughter.[5] How they carried through Kentucky on two horses thus laden articles needful in journey and forest abode,[6] does not appear; but it was managed in some fashion.

Thus Thomas Lincoln 'packed through,' as such methods of

[1] 'The pioneers made their location where there was plenty of good spring water.' Cockrum, 510.

'The pioneer located his home with little regard to anything but a supply of good water.' *History of Indiana:* Logan Esarey, 421.

[2] Hanks to Herndon, March 12, 1866. Weik MSS.

[3] Murr, *Indiana Magazine of History,* XIII, 319; *Life of Abraham Lincoln:* Ward Hill Lamon, 21–2.

[4] Hanks's second Chicago statement. Weik MSS.

[5] Hanks to Herndon, March 7, 1866. Weik MSS.

[6] Hanks in his second Chicago statement says that they carried feather beds, clothing, and other articles, which, of course, is absurd.

travel and conveyance were then called, to the Kentucky shore of the Ohio. Their route lay through Elizabethtown [1] where, however, it seems they did not tarry. In two days, the ferry was reached, where, leaving the horses, the Lincoln family was taken across the river to Posey's farm on the Indiana side.

There, it is said, Thomas Lincoln borrowed a wagon to take wife, children, and household articles to Pigeon Creek. If he went in a wagon, it is well-nigh certain that it was wholly of wood, with solid wheels made from sections of great logs, since few if any other kind of vehicles were used in the backwoods at that time; [2] and it is probable that this clumsy contraption was drawn by oxen.[3] But it is more likely that he used the common conveyance of those days, a stout heavy sled, which generally was employed for rough going, even in summer time.[4]

Two days, at the very least, it must have taken to reach the knoll which the father had selected several weeks earlier; no road whatever existed,[5] and only a trail, 'Blazed out part of the way By a Man By the [name] of Jesse Hoskins,' served to guide them. 'The Ballance of the way . . . Lincoln had to Cut his way,' writes Dennis Hanks. So Thomas felled trees, cut underbrush and vines and made openings through which the oxen could drag the sled or wagon forward. Over stumps and rocks, across gullies, bogs, mounds, and soggy ground, they crept onward and, finally, reached the spot 'Rite in the Brush,' [6] where Abraham Lincoln was to spend the next fourteen years.

Winter was at hand — it may be that the thin snow even then was beginning to fly. Thomas hastily built a shelter for his family. It was a 'half-faced camp,' such as hunters were wont

[1] Friend to Herndon, March 19, 1866. Weik MSS.

[2] 'We did not have wagons in those days.' Statement of Allen Brooner: Hobson, 19.

[3] Even in 1830, fourteen years later, in Wayne County, Ind., where the settlers were unusually enterprising, the only wagons were of this kind and usually hauled by oxen. *Recollections:* Harris, 22–4.

The first wagon of any kind in the State was brought by John Small in 1814, but it is not described. Murr, *Indiana Magazine of History,* XIII, 320. And see *Historic Indiana:* Julia H. Levering, 71–2.

[4] *Recollections:* Harris, 22–4. Such sleds are still used over difficult forest roads in Maine and elsewhere during the summer months, since wagons are impracticable because of destructive wrenching from rocks and roots or miring in sloughs.

[5] Grigsby's statement. Weik MSS.

[6] Hanks to Herndon, March 7, 1866. Weik MSS.

to throw up as a protection against the weather, not unlike that sometimes found in sugar-camps at a later day.[1] A pole was laid from branch to branch of two convenient trees; a few feet opposite these trees two stout saplings forked at the top, the bottom ends sharpened, were thrust into the ground; another pole, parallel with the first, laid in the crotches; and the frame was completed by still two other poles fixed upon the ends of those already placed. On three sides poles were piled upon one another; and a roof was contrived of poles, brush, and leaves.

One side of this structure, which was only fourteen feet wide,[2] was not enclosed; and before this open side, a fire, started by steel and tinder,[3] was kept burning, upon which cooking was done. The fire also furnished such heat as the inhabitants of the half-faced camp could get, albeit sometimes accompanied by smoke, according to the caprices of the wind. At night, too, the blaze served to keep wild beasts from those who slept beneath that roof of brush.[4] The loose, unhardened earth was the floor, on which leaves were thickly strewn; and over these was spread such bedding as had been brought, skins for the most part and possibly a blanket.[5]

Within and about this camp of poles and brush existed Abraham Lincoln, then in his eighth year, together with his sister and parents throughout the winter of 1816–17.[6] Hanks relates that the second day after the family arrived, the boy killed a turkey 'with his farthers Riffle,' more by accident than skill, since

[1] Hanks's Chicago statements. Weik MSS.

[2] Hanks to Herndon, no date, but in 1866. Weik MSS.

'It was not a Cabin at all it was one of those half face camps a Bout 14 feet open in front.' *Ib.*

In his second Chicago statement Hanks says that he helped build the half-face camp, although he did not come to Indiana until a year later.

[3] This method continued until 1850. Dudley, 47. Often fire was borrowed, live coals covered with ashes being carried in a kettle from one cabin to another. *Ib.*, 55. And see Levering, 72.

[4] For a good description of this half-faced camp see Murr, *Indiana Magazine of History*, XIII, 320–1. And see Esarey, 421–2; Cockrum, 161; *Boone*, Thwaites, 63–4. As for Thomas Lincoln's hut, see Lamon, 22.

[5] This was not unusual. Many settlers, at first, had only brush and skins to sleep on. Cockrum, 501–2.

[6] 'He lived quite on the level, if not below, that of thousands of slaves whom he afterwards liberated.' Murr, *Indiana Magazine of History*, XIII, 321.

'Turkies two Numer[ous] to Mention.'[1] No other food but game brought in by Thomas Lincoln was possible at first; and water was to be had only by melting the snow, or by carrying in a kettle from the distant spring. Luckily Thomas Lincoln did not have far to go to get sustenance for his family, game filling the thickets that surrounded the small hill on which the half-faced camp was built. 'We did not have to go more than 4 or 5 hundred Yards to Kill deer, turkeys and other wild game,' Dennis Hanks relates of the following year.[2]

At last came the spring of 1817. Wild rose, swamp lily, wild honeysuckle, blue flag and yellow flag, Sweet William bloomed; crab apple, wild plum, haw trees blossomed; grape clusters began to form; abundant dogwood made spots of white among the brush and trees.[3] The waters of Pigeon Creek rose in their banks and, warmed by the season, invited those begrimed by winter's unwashed months.

Thomas Lincoln went back to Kentucky for swine, animals which all settlers kept, and on his return to Indiana was accompanied by Thomas Sparrow and Dennis Hanks. Dennis tells that 'at the Same time he [Lincoln] Drove his stalk Hoggs to Poseys and thare left them in the Beach Mast.' But alas for the pigs and Lincoln's hope of pork! 'I and Sparrow,' writes Hanks, 'Started home [Kentucky] and we had Not Ben at home Not More than a week tell here cum all the Hoggs A Bare had got a Mung them [and] Killed one this was a Bout 80 miles the[y] Cum.'[4]

In the autumn of 1817, Nancy Lincoln's heart was gladdened

[1] Hanks to Herndon, March 7 and 12, 1866. Also Hanks's second Chicago statement. Weik MSS.

[2] Hanks's second Chicago statement. Weik MSS.

[3] Hanks to Herndon, May 4, 1866; and Elizabeth Crawford to same, May 3, 1866. Weik MSS.

[4] Hanks to Herndon, March 12, 1866. Also Hanks's Charleston statement. Weik MSS. The hogs 'swam the Ohio' back to Kentucky. I 'saw them Knew them.' *Ib.*

Swine were kept in large numbers by the pioneers, the poorest settler always having several hogs. They lived on mast and became very wild. Bear constantly attacked them. See Cockrum, 470, 490–3.

'The bears, during the summer, are lean and hungry, and seize hogs and eat them alive. It is no uncommon thing to see hogs escape home with the loss of a pound or two of living flesh.' Faux: Thwaites, XI, 228, near Princeton, Ind., Nov. 7–8, 1819; *Recollections:* Harris, 39–40; Michaux: Thwaites, III, 246.

by the arrival of her aunt and uncle, Betsy and Thomas Sparrow, who with Dennis Hanks, now eighteen years of age,[1] had come to live permanently with the Lincolns.[2] 'Lincoln had Bilt another Cabin By this time,' says Hanks, 'and got in it a Bout 40 Rods apart' from the half-faced camp.[3] This cabin was of the usual type, round logs with the bark on [4] and roof of poles and slabs. It was larger than any the Lincoln family had lived in, being eighteen feet wide and twenty feet long; and it was high enough for a loft beneath the roof, reached by pegs driven in the log walls.[5]

But no floor was laid, no door contrived, no window; [6] even the roof was not finished when cold weather came. Nor did the approach of another winter quicken the domestic enterprise of Thomas Lincoln; and Hanks chronicles of this and later years, that 'we all hunted pretty much all the time, Especially So when we got tired of work — which was very often I will assure you.' [7]

In the uncompleted cabin Thomas, Nancy and their children spent the fall of 1817 and the following winter; Thomas and Betsy Sparrow with Dennis Hanks, occupying 'that Darne Little half face camp,' as Dennis called it,[8] near by. No dogs or cats cheered the Lincoln hut, no chickens, hogs or cows were about.[9] The only light was from hog fat.[10] For most of the day the two men roved with their rifles, they, Nancy, and the children, living well-nigh exclusively on wild animals and birds —

[1] Hanks was born in Hardin County, Ky., May 15, 1799. R. N. Chapman to Jesse W. Weik, March 22, 1904. Chapman was Hanks's grandson. Also Hanks's written statement, April 2, 1866. Weik MSS.

[2] Hanks to Herndon, March 12, 1866. Weik MSS.

[3] *Ib.* Hanks is badly confused as to the time of his arrival and of other events, but says, 'I cant tell Exactly Bout Dates.' Same to same, no date, but in 1866, and his second Chicago statement.

[4] Cabins of hewed logs were seldom built before 1830. *History of Warrick, Spencer and Perry Counties*, Ind., 411.

[5] Hanks's second Chicago statement. Weik MSS. Hanks thus describes the beds in the loft: 'Here were the beds. The floor of the loft was clap board and the beds lay on this. Here I and Abe slept and I was married there to Abes Step Sister, Miss Elizabeth Johnston.' *Ib.*

[6] *Ib.*; Nicolay and Hay, I, 29.

[7] Hanks's second Chicago statement. Weik MSS.

[8] Hanks to Herndon, March 12, 1866. Weik MSS.

[9] Hanks's second Chicago statement. Weik MSS.

[10] *Ib.*; Levering, 68–9.

'ate them as meat, water and bread,' as Hanks told Herndon.[1] Sometimes Lincoln and Hanks varied their hunting by search for wild honey and 'found bee trees all over the forest.'[2] In the autumn nuts and wild fruit added variety to their fare. Hanks records that 'the country was full of chesnuts, Paw paus, . . . wild-turky peas;'[3] and hickory-nuts, walnuts, hazel-nuts were plentiful.

Now and then, when not hunting, the men cleared a patch of about six acres;[4] and a little corn and other vegetables were raised. If any corn ripened, the kernels were broken by pounding with a stone or axe-head in a mortar made by hollowing a place on top of a hard-wood stump, as was done by most people of the backwoods.[5] No mill was nearer than seventeen miles on the banks of the Ohio 'close to Posey's;' and when we got there, laments Dennis Hanks, 'the mill was a poor concern . . . a little bit of a tread horse mill the ground meal of which a hound could Eat as fast as it was ground.'[6]

David Turnham describes the mill as one that 'would grind from ten to fifteen bushels of corn in a day;' even a better mill built later gave such scanty output that Turnham often had to go 'twice to git one grist.'[7] Yet even such a mill 'was a God Send.'[8] Thereafter, when small fields had been cleared and before other mills were built nearer to his cabin, Thomas Lincoln and others of the scattered settlement went to this mill to have their sacks of corn ground into coarse meal, as occasional variation from the grain broken in the stump mortars.[9]

[1] Hanks's Charleston statement. Weik MSS.

[2] Hanks's second Chicago statement. Weik MSS. And see Cockrum, 338.

[3] Hanks's Charleston statement. Weik MSS.

[4] Hanks's second Chicago statement. Weik MSS.

[5] This method was practised in Wayne County as late as 1833. *Recollections:* Harris, 9; Turpie, 21–2. And see Levering, 67.

[6] Hanks's second Chicago statement. Weik MSS.

[7] Turnham to Herndon, Feb. 21, 1866. Weik MSS.

[8] Hanks's second Chicago statement. Weik MSS.

Two years after this, in 1820, settlers in Wayne County, one of the richest parts of Indiana, went from ten to thirty miles to mill and often waited two or three days for their turns. Boys usually took a sack of corn on horseback and returned with the meal. *Recollections:* Harris, 9.

[9] The miller's toll was one fourth of the grain ground. Levering, 70. Wheat, oats,

It was more than a year after he had squatted on the land, that Thomas Lincoln bethought him of the necessity of entering it legally. So he made his way through the forests ninety miles to Vincennes where the land office then was, and, on October 15, 1817, entered the Southwest quarter of Section 32, Township 4 South, Range 5 West, paying the preliminary instalment of sixteen dollars, for which a receipt was given him.[1] This tract of one hundred and sixty acres, for half of which, as will appear, Thomas Lincoln finally succeeded in getting a patent, was at that time in Hurricane Township, Warrick County, which within a year became Carter Township, Spencer County. But four other entries of land had then been made in the whole township, each for an entire section or more.[2]

The following year, however, nine new settlers entered at the land office for tracts in Carter Township, all but two of the entries being for undivided sections.[3] Thus Lincoln acquired a sort of option on one hundred and sixty acres. In December he paid sixty-four dollars more, thus completing his first instalment of eighty dollars,[4] one fourth of the purchase price, the land being sold by the government for two dollars per acre. His right to a patent to the land when he should make the remaining payments thus being established, he rested content and the routine of farming, hunting, and carpentering continued.

Thus dragged along the slow dull weeks. Another winter went by, another spring and summer. Then in the autumn of 1818 a disease, mysterious as forest shadows, came suddenly upon Pigeon Creek. 'The milk sick' the settlers called it, because it attacked cattle and particularly milch cows as virulently as men and women. No cure was known and those seized generally died, and died quickly. The nearest doctor lived thirty-five miles from Pigeon Creek [5] and, if accessible, could have done no

and barley were thrashed with a flail and winnowed with a sheet. *Ib.* and 67. Faux found that one eighth was the miller's toll. Faux: Thwaites, XI, 199.

[1] No. 8499. General Land Office Records, Interior Department, Washington. In this receipt Lincoln's name is spelled Linkern.

[2] *Hist. W., S. & P. Cos.*, Ind., 272. [3] *Ib.*

[4] Receipt No. 9205. General Land Office Records, Interior Department, Washington. Lincoln's name is here spelled Linkhorn.

[5] Hanks's second Chicago statement. Weik MSS.

good, since medical treatment proved wholly inadequate then, or for many years afterward.[1]

Betsy and Thomas Sparrow, who were known in the settlement as 'Mrs. Lincoln's father and mother,'[2] were stricken in the half-faced camp and there on skins and leaves covering the ground they died, about eighteen months after their coming.[3] A tree was felled, a log of right length cut and whip-sawed into rough, uneven boards. These Thomas Lincoln fashioned into rude boxes, fastening them together with wooden pegs driven into holes made by a small auger, for no nails were at hand.[4] Into these boxes the bodies were placed, and, upon a wooded hill some quarter mile distant, were buried.

To the sick old man and woman Nancy Lincoln had given all the help she could; she had visited, in her last illness, the wife of Peter Brooner, a hunter chiefly,[5] whose cabin was only half a mile away.[6] Mrs. Brooner died, too; and, at the same time, Nancy Lincoln fell sick. Neighbors attended her and one of them, William Wood, recalls that he 'sat up with her all one night.'[7] Thus 'she struggled on' for a week; and at the last, calling Sarah and Abraham to her side, told them to be good to their father, to each other, and to reverence God.[8] She died in October, 1818,[9] on the seventh day of her illness.

Thomas Lincoln made a coffin for his wife as he had for the others; and on a sled,[10] as the first pioneer woman in that region had been taken to her grave, the body of Nancy Lincoln was

[1] For the best account of the 'milk sickness,' see Cockrum, 401. Col. Cockrum, who wrote from personal observation and experience, says that whole towns were depopulated by the scourge; also a bilious fever, resembling yellow fever, was quite as deadly and more general than the milk sickness.

[2] William Wood's statement. Weik MSS.

[3] Hanks to Herndon, March 12, 1866. Weik MSS.

[4] 'There was not a nail in a hundred miles of them.' Cockrum, 161.

[5] Brooner, like Lincoln, had come from Kentucky and was 'a widely known bear hunter.' *Hist. W., S. & P. Cos.*, Ind., 557.

[6] Statement of Henry Brooner: Hobson, 18.

[7] Wood's statement. Weik MSS.

[8] Hanks's second Chicago statement. Weik MSS.

[9] Grigsby's statement. Weik MSS. Grigsby does not name the day of the month, which is said to have been October 5, but there is no evidence as to the exact date of her death.

[10] Statement of Henry Brooner: Hobson, 18.

hauled to the knoll and buried by the side of her foster parents.[1] No stone or board was placed to mark where she lay, nor during the life-time of her husband or son was a monument of any kind erected over that neglected grave.[2]

Abraham was now nine years old, and there is no evidence that his emotions were unlike those of other children of similar age and in the same situation. Back to their doorless, windowless, floorless cabin, went Thomas Lincoln and his children; and there, with Dennis Hanks, they lived through the remainder of the winter, through the spring, the summer and the autumn of 1819. Sarah, now in her thirteenth year, did the cooking.[3]

The father and Dennis Hanks kept on hunting, between infrequent intervals of work in the clearing and when Thomas was not doing some small job of carpentering for other settlers. 'We always hunted,' Dennis reiterates, 'it made no difference what came for we more or less depended on it for a living — nay for life.' Abraham brought water from the spring and creek, or from holes dug to catch the seepage from rains; but this device was 'a tempo[ra]ry affair.'[4]

Sometime after the death of Nancy Lincoln, an itinerant Baptist preacher, David Elkin, came from Kentucky on a visit to the Pigeon Creek settlement; and while there preached a sermon over the graves of Nancy Lincoln and those who had died from the plague during the fatal days of 1818.[5] Abraham and his sister were present of course, as were Thomas Lincoln and Dennis Hanks, and all who lived in the settlement, about twenty in number.[6] But Abraham had not written to Elkin

[1] Hanks to Herndon, April, 1866. Weik MSS.

The particular spot where each of these people is buried is, of course, unknown; but the location of the grave of Nancy Lincoln is approximately determined, since the graves are close together.

[2] Lamon, 29. [3] Hanks's second Chicago statement. Weik MSS. [4] *Ib.*

[5] Hanks to Herndon, Jan. 6, 1866. Weik MSS. Hanks says that Elkin came to visit the Lincoln family. 'David Elkins of Hardin County Ky. Cum to pay us a Visit and preacht hir furnel.' *Ib.* There was much visiting between the Indiana settlers and their Kentucky friends. Dennis Hanks went back and forth frequently. Hanks's second Chicago statement. Weik MSS.

[6] 'Next question how many people was at Mrs. Lincoln furnel at hir Beriel Thare was aBout 20 persons the hole Nabourhood.' Hanks to Herndon, Jan. 6, 1866. Weik MSS.

And see list of settlers in Carter township: *Hist. W., S. & P. Cos.*, Ind., 272. A year

asking him to come and preach a funeral sermon over his mother's grave, as legend has it; even if the boy had thought of such a ceremony, of which he then could have known little or nothing, he could not write at that time, nor indeed for five years thereafter, 'so that he could understand' what he wrote.

Other settlers were taking up claims in the region, cabins of unbarked logs were rising here and there, children multiplying, society forming. In common with most people of the Western country, those on and about Pigeon Creek were very ignorant, rough mannered, vividly superstitious. The waxing and waning of the moon marked for them, the times to plant and sow. The howling of a dog meant the certain coming of death among them; and if a shovel or edged tool was brought into a cabin there could be no doubt that a coffin would be taken out. Nothing must be begun on Friday; a bird alighting at the window or flying into the house meant coming sorrow. Ghosts visited earthly scenes and haunted the unworthy. Witches, too, were real beings of evil; dreams were forecasts of events to come. Faith doctors and charms were 'implicitly believed in.'[1]

The cabins of these wood folk were often ill-kept, dirty in the extreme, infested with vermin.[2] There was no sanitation. Bathing or washing the body in any way was seldom attempted, seldom thought of except, of course, during 'swimming time' in warm weather. It is hard to see how, from December to March inclusive, the clothes they wore could have been washed.[3] Food was mostly of flesh, with some corn or wheat

later, however, thirty-one men, all then living in the whole of Carter township, voted at an election held in the home of Jonathan Greathouse. *Ib.*

[1] Murr, *Indiana Magazine of History*, XIII, 335–9. Murr tells of these and other superstitions from personal observation. See also Cockrum, 339–41, and *The First of the Hoosiers:* George Cary Eggleston, 88.

[2] Welby: Thwaites, XII, 233–4.

[3] Lack of bathing and washing clothes was practically universal among the pioneers. A well-educated and carefully reared New England woman who went with her husband to live in Illinois about this time records that she could not wash clothes oftener than every three months. *A Woman's Story of Pioneer Illinois:* Christiana Holmes Tillson, 86. Mrs. Tillson was a New England woman who went with her husband to Illinois in 1822. The book consists of letters to her children and is one of the best sources on early Illinois.

Between Princeton and Vincennes Faux saw only two 'neat log houses' — all others

broken in stump mortars; and, generally, the cooking was poor and insufficient, frying in grease being a favorite method.

Cabins usually were packed, husband and wife, children, guests, relatives, and hired men living in a single small room — cooking, eating, and sleeping there,[1] a loft sometimes relieving the congestion. The sense of modesty was embryonic, and men took off their clothes before women without a thought by either of any impropriety.[2] Men and boys wore deerskin trousers and coats and coonskin caps; the clothing of women and girls was of linsey-woolsey, home-made from wool and flax.[3] Usually everybody went barefoot during spring and summer; [4] and when they did not, wore moccasins made of hide, until shoes appeared.

Incredible quantities of whisky were consumed,[5] everybody,

were 'miserable log holes . . . and indolent, dirty, sickly, wild-looking inhabitants.' Faux: Thwaites, XI, 213.

[1] Travelers and others wrote many descriptions of cabins with numerous inmates, such as that of an early schoolmaster who boarded in a cabin sixteen feet square, where dwelt husband, wife, ten children, three dogs, two cats, and the teacher. Nicolay and Hay, I, 18.

'In a little log-hole . . . belonging to Mr. Ferrel, who, with his family, some adults, male and female, in all ten souls, sleep in one room, fifteen by ten . . . in three beds standing on a dirt floor. . . . The victuals are served up in a hand-bason; and thus one room serves for parlour, kitchen, hall, bed-room and pantry.' Faux: Thwaites, XI, 231. Nov. 9, 1819, near Princeton, Ind.

A Methodist circuit rider often found 'but one room to cook, eat, preach, pray, and sleep in for the whole family' and preacher. Brunson, I, 219.

[2] In one of the best cabins seen by William Faux, that of John Ingle in southwestern Indiana, 1819, the two men slept together next to 'six fine but dirty children,' while Mrs. Ingle and the hired girl slept in another bed. 'Males dress and undress before the females and nothing is thought of it. Shame or rather . . . false shame, or delicacy, does not exist here. It is not unusual for a male and a female to sleep in the same room uncurtained, holding conversations while in bed.' Faux: Thwaites, XI, 226. Nov. 6, 1819; and Welby: Thwaites, XII, 229.

[3] Levering, 69. [4] Esarey, 424.

[5] 'No difference if grain was scarce or dear, or times hard, or the people poor, they would make and drink whiskey. And the number of little distilleries was wonderful. Within two miles of where we lived there were three of them. . . . The custom was for every man to drink it, on all occasions that offered; and the women would take it, sweetened and reduced to toddy.' *Recollections of Life in Ohio from 1813 to 1840:* William Cooper Howells, 125–6.

At Princeton, in 1819, Faux noted 'excessive drinking seems the all-pervading, easily-besetting sin of this wild hunting country.' Faux: Thwaites, XI, 212–3, Nov. 2, 1819.

'Another failing in their character is drunkenness; and they are extremely quarrelsome when intoxicated.' Woods: Thwaites, X, 317. And see Fordham, 65.

In 1819 alone, three licenses were granted to retail liquor in Boonville, Warrick County, although that town then had a population fewer than one hundred; eleven

women and preachers included, drinking the fiery liquid.[1] A bottle was in every cabin — to offer it was the first gesture of welcome, to refuse unpardonable incivility.[2] All used tobacco, chewing, smoking, snuffing; and corn-cob pipes in the mouths of women were a not uncommon sight.[3] Men were quick to fight and combats were brutal.[4] Profanity was general and emphatic.[5]

Yet an innate love of justice, truthfulness, and fair dealing permeated every community, and generous and ready hospitality was the highest ordinance. The desire that their children should get 'learning' was well-nigh a passion, second only, indeed, to their respect for law and insistence upon that regular procedure afforded by courts. The upright judge, was, by them, the most respected of men; the capable lawyer, the most admired. Religion, too, was a vital part of their lives;[6] and churches were organized as soon as there were settlers enough to

years later, 1830, but eighty-seven people lived there. *Hist. W., S. & P. Cos.*, Ind., 76.

An inn at Corydon, the State capital, a village of about one hundred cabins, advertised that dinner for 'gentlemen' on the Fourth of July would include 'plenty of Domestic Liquors,' all for '$1 per head.' *Indiana Gazette*, June 29, 1821, as quoted by Charles Moores in *Indiana Magazine of History*, XIII, 37.

As late as 1833 the Sheriff of Perry County was fined for being so drunk during court time that he could not perform his duties. *Hist. W., S. & P. Cos.*, Ind., 621.

[1] Grigsby's statement. Weik MSS.

[2] 'Whisky was invariably offered to a guest. The farmer who did not supply his field-hands with liquor was considered too stingy to work for. . . . "Two" fips a gallon was the price.' Levering, 74.

Faux found whisky, as well as bread and meat, to be considered 'common necessities.' Faux: Thwaites, XI, 177.

[3] 'We frequently saw women nursing their children with pipes in their mouths.' Woods, Sept. 7, 1819: Thwaites, X, 247. Also Dudley, 15. 'The mother sat smoking her pipe, fat and easy.' Faux: Thwaites, XI, 248.

[4] Levering, 184. The largest number of fines by Justices of the Peace was for fighting. There were then so many cases of this kind in Spencer County that its historian calls the period the 'Fist and Skull Age.' *Hist. W., S. & P. Cos.*, Ind., 400.

In Perry County at the fall term of court, 1815, there were sixteen indictments, 'mainly for assault and battery.' *Ib.*, 618.

'I saw a man this day with his face sadly disfigured. He had lost his nose, bitten off close down to its root, in a fight with a nose-loving neighbour.' Faux: Thwaites, XI, 22.

Fordham found that biting and gouging were common methods of fighting. Fordham, 65, 149.

[5] At the first Circuit Court in Perry County, April 3, 1815, twenty-five men were indicted for profanity. *Hist. W., S. & P. Cos.*, Ind., 617.

[6] Levering, 86.

form small congregations. Preaching was crude, direct, vociferous; but it was an effective force for good.[1]

Schools were started [2] almost as soon as churches — in fact church and school were companion influences for decency, knowledge, and morality in pioneer life. And grave was the need of them. The drinking of whisky, the fighting and the swearing, were accompanied by repellent conditions of living. Men and boys told noisome anecdotes. Social relations were loose and undisciplined.[3]

A peculiar and distinctive dialect resulted from the untaught and unrestrained speech; and this dialect became common to the vast majority of people who had crossed the mountains to occupy the forests and prairies of the Western Country. If a man was feeble he was 'powerful weak,' and when he grew better he was 'fitter.' The word 'sot' meant sit, set, or sat. Nobody fought, they 'fit.' You did not stay awhile, but 'a spell.' How do you do, was expressed by the exclamation 'howdey.' You came 'outen,' not out of, the house, or field; and when there was much or many of anything there was a 'heap.' Wages were 'yearned,' not earned, and children always were called 'young uns.' When a person was persuaded or induced, he was 'hornswoggled.' Where was 'whar'; came 'kum'; heard 'hearn'; took 'tuck';

[1] Observers are unanimous in praise of these pioneer preachers. The Methodist 'circuit-rider' is especially commended. Smith, 97. *Ind. Hist. Soc. Pubs.*, I, 163.

For an excellent description of the appearance of these men see *The Circuit Rider:* Edward Eggleston, 88; and as to the matter and manner of their preaching see *ib.*, 103–9.

'Mr. Devan, when preaching at Mr. Ingle's, stripped at it, taking off coat, waistcoat, and cravat, unbuttoning his shirt collar, and wildly throwing about his arms. He made the maddest gesticulations for the space of two hours, ever seen in a man professing sanity.' Faux: Thwaites, XI, 285. Nov. 30, 1819, at 'The English Settlement' near Princeton, Ind.

Rev. Alexander Devan was a prosperous farmer, a member of the Indiana Constitutional Convention in 1816, and one of the first Baptist preachers in southwestern Indiana. *Ib.*

[2] The impulse for education in early Indiana is shown by the number of ambitious private schools established: a seminary at Corydon in 1816, Vincennes Academy 1817, Martin's Academy at Livonia 1819, New Albany School 1823, New Harmony Seminary 1826, Cambridge Academy at Lawrenceburg 1826, Hanover Academy 1827, and Eel River Seminary at Logansport 1829. *Hist. of Education in Indiana:* Richard G. Boone, 60. There was literary ambition too. In 1818 a Life of Napoleon, of unknown authorship, was printed in Salem, Ind., by Ebenezer Patrick and Beebe Booth — the first book printed in that town.

[3] At the first circuit court of Perry County, April 3, 1815, nearly all indictments were

care 'keer'; than 'nor'; because, 'kase.' Distance and direction were expressed by 'way back' or 'over yander.' When addressing the chairman of a public meeting the speaker said 'Misteer Cheermun.' [1] Many of these idioms and pronunciations Lincoln retained throughout life — he began his famous Cooper Union speech by saying, 'Mr. Cheerman.' [2] In addition to this dialect, plain, short words were used which now are avoided. In short, says Esarey, the language of the pioneers was that of the peasantry of the eighteenth century.[3]

The amusements of the people were so contrived as to get needed work done; but they were boisterous with rampant jollity. The felling of the splendid forests to make clearings left great quantities of logs that could not be used for cabins or stables; and these logs were burned. So at 'log rollings' everybody helped mightily, ate heavily, and drank much whisky; and robust was the play and rough the jests at meal-time or when the logs were gathered and set on fire. Much the same happened when neighbors came to help put up the frames of houses or build cabins, 'raisings,' as these events were called.[4]

'Corn shuckings' were the scenes of greatest enjoyment. Men and boys were chosen by two captains and thus divided into equal groups, each strove to husk the most corn. Songs were

for rape, divorce, bigamy, slander, assault and battery, and adultery. Several divorces were granted, 'usually for unfaithfulness to the marriage vows, and for desertion.' Six or seven slander and divorce cases were tried at nearly every term of court. *Hist. W., S. & P. Cos.*, Ind., 616–8.

It was the same in other counties. At Boonville, county seat of Warrick County, cases of divorce, slander, and the like 'were on the docket almost every term of court.' *Ib.*, 62–6.

The early court records of Spencer County were destroyed by fire in 1831, but they showed, of course, the same state of things as in the adjoining counties, for, at the court held in Rockport in 1833, there were two indictments for fornication and adultery. *Ib.*, 308–9.

There were comparatively few indictments for larceny, partly because 'thieving . . . is here deemed worse than murder in consequence of the very great facility [difficulty] of living.' Faux: Thwaites, XI, 283. Nov. 29, 1819.

[1] These examples, with others, may be met in Tillson, 64–6, 79–82, 89, 96, 121–3; Dudley, 3, 45, 47, 53, 75, 141, 233; *Recollections of Early Illinois:* Joseph Gillespie, Fergus Historical Series, II, No. 13, 10–1.

[2] Murr, *Indiana Magazine of History*, XIV, 15. [3] Esarey, 418–9.

[4] *Recollections:* Harris, 263. In Wayne County, 1820–30, the meals on these occasions were boiled ham, cooked potatoes, boiled turnips, corn pone, and pumpkin pie. The men drank whisky and the women eggnog. Boys carried the whisky. *Ib.*

sung, stories told, jokes cracked; 'and pass the bottle around' was the order of the hour.[1] Sugar-boilings, wool-shearings, and hog-killings were scenes of similar festivities.[2]

'Quilting bees,' where women met to make coverings for beds, were times of scarcely less cheer; for the provisions were the same and the men had nothing to do but play and drink whisky, which was as freely offered at quiltings as at the other pioneer festivities.[3]

Such were the surroundings and the society in which Abraham Lincoln's formative years were to be spent; and we shall now witness his development under these conditions, from his tenth to his twenty-first year.

When there were enough children in the settlement to justify the starting of a school, Andrew Crawford opened one in a cabin of unhewn logs, two or three miles from the hut of Thomas Lincoln. Like all others of the time it was a subscription school,[4] the teacher taking his pay in skins or farm produce,[5] far more valuable than the 'wild-cat' paper, which then was the only form of money. Indeed Dennis Hanks testifies that throughout their sojourn in Indiana deerskins, 'Hogs and Venison hams was a Legal tender and Coon Skins all So.' [6]

The Lincoln children went to Andrew Crawford's school for

[1] *Recollections:* Harris, 34. And see *Pioneer Hist. of Ill.*: John Reynolds, 316–7. For favorable description of 'corn shuckings,' see *Circuit Rider:* Edward Eggleston, 20–9.

[2] Levering, 75–6. Also B. B. Lloyd's statement, no date. Weik MSS.

[3] Drake, 186. Dr. Drake says that all these gatherings were occasions for drinking, profanity, fighting, and indecency. *Ib.*, 184.

[4] 'Schools were then supported wholly by subscription.' *Hist. W., S. & P. Cos.*, Ind., 409.

[5] Joab Hungate, a teacher of a similar school in Spencer County at that time, was paid eight dollars a month which 'was taken partly in grain.' *Ib.* At Rockport parents paid as high as from $1.00 to $2.00 a quarter for each child. *Ib.*, 399.

[6] Hanks to Herndon, Jan. 6 and March 22, 1866. Weik MSS.

Cash was asked only for powder, shot, whisky, and salt. Levering, 82–3.

Groceries, and other provisions were traded for skins, feathers, produce, etc., which, at stated season, 'the merchant shipped off to market, and then laid in a new stock.' *Hist. W., S. & P. Cos.*, Ind., 263–4.

J. W. Lamar, who lived at Troy, says that the settlers 'took their deer and bear hides, venison hams and other game' to that village and exchanged them for powder and shot, coffee, sugar, and clothing. Hobson, 23–4.

Barter was everywhere used. For many years afterward and in so opulent a settlement as the first to be made in Wayne County 'store goods' were bought by barter. *Recollections:* Harris, 59.

a while during the winter of 1818–19.[1] The school was held in 'a rude pole cabin with huge fire-place, rude floor of puncheons and seats of same, and a window made by leaving out a log on the side to admit the light, often covered with greased paper to keep out the wind.'[2] Spelling, reading, writing, and 'ciphering to single rule of 3 no further' were taught in the haphazard manner of the period and region.[3] It was a 'blab' or 'loud school,' the children studying vocally. Punishment was administered by whipping or making the child wear the 'dunce cap.'[4] 'When we went to Crawford he tried to learn us manners,' relates Nathaniel Grigsby, showing the pupils how to enter a room, the formalities of introduction and the like.[5]

But the teacher gave up after one season, it appears, as frontier school promoters sometimes did. Thereafter Andrew Crawford disappears from the chronicles of Pigeon Creek pedagogy.[6] Lincoln was then in his tenth year and he did not again go to school until 'he was about 14 or 15.'[7] What he learned from Crawford we do not know; a little simple reading, perhaps, and how to form words with a quill pen — certainly not much more, since he could not write well until four or five years later.[8]

Back and forth during the winter months of 1818–19, went the Lincoln children from the log schoolhouse in the woods to the unfinished cabin on the knoll. Thomas Lincoln and Dennis

[1] Grigsby's statement, Sept. 12, 1865. Weik MSS.

[2] *Hist. W., S. & P. Cos.*, Ind., 413. Even three years later at Rockport, the County seat of Spencer County, the school was held in this kind of a cabin of 'round logs' — not hewed logs (*ib.*, 398–9); and this was the best schoolhouse in the County.

For an excellent description of these pioneer schools see Cockrum, 459–63. Panthers and bears sometimes attacked these school cabins. *Ib.*, 464–5.

[3] Mrs. Allen Gentry's statement. Also Hanks's first Chicago statement. Weik MSS.

[4] *Recollections:* Harris, 12–3. And see the *First of the Hoosiers*, Eggleston, 32–43.

[5] Grigsby's statement. Weik MSS. Grigsby is clear and positive as to the order in which Lincoln went to school in Indiana — first to Crawford, second to Dorsey, and third to Swaney, *ib.* The biographies usually give Dorsey as the first teacher.

[6] In May, 1818, Andrew Crawford was made a Justice of the Peace. *Hist. W., S. & P. Cos.*, Ind., 294.

[7] Grigsby's statement. Weik MSS.

[8] 'Abraham learned to write So that we could understand it in 1821.' Hanks's second Chicago statement. Weik MSS. With characteristic bragging, Hanks claimed that it was he who taught Lincoln to read and write: 'I taught Abe his first lesson in spelling, reading and writing. I taught Abe to write with a buzzards quill.' *Ib.*

Hanks were the providers, protectors, mentors. Hanks complains that they had 'to work Very hard Clair ground for to Keep Sole and Body to Geather and Every Spare time that We had we picked up our Rifle and feched in a fine Deer or turkey and in the winter time we went a Coon Hunting;' but Dennis seems to have included in this description of their toil all the years spent in Indiana.[1]

Imagination must picture the situation and manner of existence of these two men living with the girl and boy in that hut in the brush throughout the year 1819. From trustworthy accounts of better conditioned families in the same wilderness, it can only be believed that for the Lincolns 1819 was a year of squalor — mostly flesh for food, unfit water, wretched cooking, no knives or forks, bare feet, bodies partly clad, filthy beds of leaves and skins.[2]

A time came when even Thomas Lincoln could stand it no longer. So back to Kentucky he journeyed for another wife. He knew where to go, it appears, for he went directly to Elizabethtown where the woman he had first courted, Sarah Bush, still lived. She was now a widow, her first husband, Daniel Johnston, having died of the 'cold plague' in 1814,[3] leaving three children

[1] Hanks to Herndon, March 22, 1866. Weik MSS.

[2] Lamon, 26, 31.

'There are several English families living without bread, butter, milk, tea or coffee, for months. . . . Some three families cook and bake in one iron skillet, called the cook-all.' Faux: Thwaites, XI, 287–8, Dec. 9, 1819, at 'the English Settlement,' near Princeton, Ind. 'A spider skillet with lid and an earthen pot were more than the average cooking utensils possessed by a family.' Esarey, 422–3. It was with these that little Sarah Lincoln cooked for four persons for more than a year.

Faux describes the manner of life of two brothers, English immigrants in about this part of the county, though across the line in Illinois, 'living without any female, and fast barbarizing, in a most miserable log-cabin, not mudded, having only one room, no furniture of any kind, save a miserable, filthy, ragged bed. . . . Both were more filthy, stinking, ragged, and repelling, than any English stroller or beggar ever seen; garments rotting off, linen unwashed, face unshaven and unwashed, for, I should think, a month. . . . He [the elder brother] expects his sisters and [other] brothers into this miserable abode.' *Ib.*, 268, Nov. 26, 1819.

'This morning Mr. Ingle, in descending a ladder from his cock-loft bed-room, into which sun, moon, and stars peep, and all the winds and storms of heaven blow upon us, was left suspended by his arms to the chamber-floor, while the ladder fell from under him. Such are the miserable shifts to which people here submit without grumbling.' *Ib.*, 286, Dec. 1, 1819, at 'the English Settlement,' near Princeton, Ind.

[3] Haycraft to Helm, July 5, 1865. They were married March 13, 1806. The date of births of the children are not known, and Elizabeth is sometimes given as the second daughter, as, indeed, Dennis Hanks, who married her, does in one instance. See p. 45 *n*, *supra*.

for Sarah to care for, John D., Sarah [Elizabeth], and Matilda. Immediately on coming to Hardin County, Lincoln must have seen Sarah's brother, Isaac Bush, and collected from him at least part of the money which he had paid Isaac for the Sinking Spring farm eleven years before.[1] If so, it is but natural that the two men should have talked of the plight of widow and widower and the good sense of their marriage.

Certainly Lincoln made quick work of the business when he saw Sarah in Elizabethtown, and as certainly he was in funds. As related by Samuel Haycraft, then deputy clerk of Hardin County Court, Thomas Lincoln, on December 1, 1819, went to the house of Sarah Johnston in Elizabethtown, reminded her of their mutual bereavement and proposed that they get married 'right off.' The widow said she could not 'right off as she owed some little debts which she wanted to pay first.' Lincoln asked for a list of the debts 'got the list paid them off that evening. Next Morning I issued the license and they were marr[i]ed . . . right off.' [2]

Without delay Thomas and Sarah, with her three children, started for Indiana. They took with them the household goods and furniture which had been gathered by the thrifty Sarah during the lifetime of her first husband. In comparison with the store taken by Thomas and Nancy Lincoln in the winter of 1816, Sarah Lincoln's domestic effects must have been opulent; for it took a wagon and team of four horses, borrowed from Ralph Crume, a brother-in-law of Lincoln, to haul the load to the Ohio.[3] Pots, pans, skillets, blankets, covers, a feather bed, a bureau which 'cost 45 dollars in K[entuck]y,' [4] were among the things piled in the wagon.[5]

So, in mid-winter 1819–20, came Thomas and Sarah Lincoln

[1] See p. 23, *supra.*

[2] Haycraft to Herndon, Dec. 7, 1866. Weik MSS. Thomas Lincoln and Sarah Johnston were married, Dec. 2, 1819. Records Hardin County Court.

[3] Nicolay and Hay, I, 32. Thomas Lincoln's sister, Mary, married Ralph Crume, Aug. 5, 1801. Waldo Lincoln, 202.

'The Last time the time Mrs. Johnston cum . . . he cum in a wagon . . . a 4 horse team Belonging to his Broth[er]-in-law Ralph Crumes of Brackinridge County Ky.' Hanks to Herndon, March 12, 1866. Weik MSS.

[4] Statement of Mrs. Thomas Lincoln, Sept. 8, 1865. Weik MSS.

[5] Herndon, I, 30, 31.

to the dirty, unkempt cabin near Pigeon Creek, where his neglected children and the vagrant Dennis Hanks were maintaining a bare existence. So, too, began a new and distinct period in the life of Abraham Lincoln. Sarah Lincoln was blessed with energy and sense, was a good housekeeper, prudent, systematic, and with a passion for cleanliness. She was, says her grand-daughter, 'a very tall Woman, Straight as an Indian, fair Complection and was when I first remember her, very handsome, Sprightly talkative and proud, Wore her Hair curled till Gray, Is Kind hearted and very Charitable and also very industrious.' [1]

No more hunting for Thomas Lincoln and Dennis Hanks until they had split and smoothed puncheons and made a floor, finished the roof, put in a door, cut a place for greased paper to let in the light.[2] The children were washed, combed and 'dressed . . . up' so as to look 'more human'; the cabin cleansed, decent bedding put on the 'bedsteads made . . . of poles and clapboards.' [3] The fire-place was overhauled, ample cooking utensils installed; and Thomas was stirred into making a proper table, better stools and, perchance, a hickory chair or two.[4] The change was so pronounced that, nearly thirty-five years afterward, Lincoln remembered and described it.[5]

Eight persons, three adults and five children, now inhabited the Lincoln cabin.[6] Three or four years later, in 1823, John Hanks, the half-brother of Dennis Hanks, joined the Lincoln family and lived with them for four years,[7] thus making nine who dwelt within those crowded walls. But, under Sarah Lincoln's guidance, there were comparative order and harmony. The increased size of the family required more food and clothing of course, but this was easily managed by the efficient housewife. The burden of supplying provisions was chiefly upon Thomas Lincoln and Dennis Hanks; this did not trouble them greatly.

[1] Harriet A. Chapman to Herndon, Dec. 17, 1865. Weik MSS.

[2] Lamon, 31–2. [3] Mrs. Lincoln's statement. Weik MSS.

[4] Herndon, I, 31; Nicolay and Hay, I, 32.

[5] A. H. Chapman to Herndon, Oct. 8, 1865. Weik MSS.

[6] Thomas and Sarah Lincoln, Dennis Hanks, two Lincoln and three Johnston children.

[7] John Hanks to Herndon, June 13, 1865.

Without heavy exertion they produced sufficient vegetables, relying for the most part, however, upon game; for 'the Country was wild and desolate.' [1] The impulse to work which Sarah Lincoln brought into the life of her husband never spurred him to produce a surplus — he 'Jest Raised a Nuff for his own use,' not 'Mor than Bought his Shugar and Coffee and Such Like,' declares Dennis Hanks, adding that Lincoln 'was a very pore Man.' After awhile, indeed, when brush and trees had been cut from a few more acres, there were bigger crops of corn, and even 'Sum wheat a Nuf for a cake [on] a Sundy morning.' [2]

But often the family larder was allowed to run very low, it seems. Once all they had to eat was potatoes, which led Abraham to remark, when his father asked 'the blessing,' that they were 'very poor blessings.' [3] Food little concerned the boy, however, for 'Abe was a moderate eater,' his stepmother assures us. 'He ate what was set before him, making no complaint; he seemed carless about this. I cooked his meals for nearly 15 years.' And Mrs. Lincoln adds that 'he always had good health.' [4]

Thomas Lincoln varied his occupations of hunting and farming by working as carpenter. Some thought, indeed, that he preferred such work to labor on the farm, and 'relied upon it for a living' rather than upon agriculture.[5] 'Often and at various

[1] Mrs. Lincoln's statement, Sept. 8, 1865. Weik MSS.

Faux records that, in the fall of 1819, Major Hooker 'killed fourteen deer and one bear. . . . Cook also met a fine bear.' Faux: Thwaites, XI, 286. At 'the English Settlement' near Princeton, Ind., Dec. 1, 1819.

'Partridges, or quails, are here so tame that, at noon-day, a man may kill them by throwing a stick into the covey.' *Ib.*, 299. Dec. 25, 1819.

Even thirty years afterward deer, wild turkey, otter and the like were still abundant in the forests of Spencer County. As late as 1848 Samuel Graham killed six deer 'in one day, besides three wild turkeys;' and on another day he 'killed nine otters, and on still another day sixty-seven muskrats;' and this chronicler observes of the times of Thomas Lincoln and Dennis Hanks, that 'the earlier hunters had higher sport with larger and fiercer animals.' *Hist. W., S. & P. Cos.*, Ind., 260.

In 1820 Robert Harding, while in his canoe at night on White River near the present site of Indianapolis, killed nine deer in the space of five miles; and thirty-seven turkeys out of a single flock were killed on a spot that is now the heart of the city. *Old Settlers:* Robert B. Duncan, *Ind. Hist. Soc. Pubs.*, II, 387–8.

[2] Hanks to Herndon, Jan. 26, 1866. Weik MSS.

[3] Harriet A. Chapman to Herndon, Dec. 10, [1866]. Weik MSS.

[4] Mrs. Lincoln's statement. Weik MSS.

[5] John Romine's statement, Sept. 14, 1865. Weik MSS.

times,' says William Wood, a settler living near the Lincolns, 'he worked for me — made cupboards and other household furniture for me. He built my house . . . did all the inside work;' and Wood relates that 'Abe would come to my house with his father and play and romp with my children.'[1] Thomas Lincoln made furniture for other cabins too, such as that of Josiah Crawford which had one low room fifteen feet square.[2] Sometimes Abraham helped the father in his carpentering, although he disliked hammer and drawing-knife even more, if possible, than he did the plough and hoe. Once the two built a wagon for James Gentry, we are told, constructing the vehicle 'entirely out of wood, even to the hickory rims to the wheels.'[3]

From the first Thomas Lincoln had been hard put to get water, and this defect was sharply noted by Sarah Lincoln as soon as she was on the ground. Her daughter, then a very little girl, writes that 'My Earliest recellection of Abe is . . . carrying water about one mile' — a pet cat following him to the spring.[4] To get water nearer to his cabin Thomas Lincoln sunk many holes, but without result. He 'dug his hill to find water with a hand comb as it were — wanted water badly,'[5] Dennis Hanks told Herndon. Seemingly he did not succeed and believed that no water could be found by digging; for he refused to hire 'a Yankee' to discover water by a 'driving rod.' 'Do you suppose,' said he, 'that I am going to give you $5 for a pig in a poke?'[6]

[1] Wood's statement. Weik MSS.

[2] Statement of Elizabeth Crawford. Weik MSS. Josiah Crawford came to Indiana from Kentucky in 1824, five years after the second marriage of Thomas Lincoln. Also see Hobson, 22.

[3] Statement of J. W. Lamar. Weik MSS. Also Hobson, 24.

[4] Mrs. Moore's statement, Sept. 8, 1865. Weik MSS. Since there were no cats before Sarah Lincoln came, it is reasonably certain that this cat was brought by her.

[5] Hanks's Charleston statement, Sept. 8, 1865. Weik MSS.

[6] *Ib.* Detection by means of a 'driving [divining] rod,' of water beneath the surface of the soil then was, and for decades continued to be, a favorite method of determining spots for the digging of wells. The 'water finder' would cut a forked switch and, with an end in either hand, the butt straight forward, would walk slowly over the ground where water was sought. It was believed that when a point was reached where water was not far underground, the butt of the rod would turn sharply downward. Many had faith in this device and 'water finders' charged heavily for their discoveries. The sum asked of Thomas Lincoln, for instance, was extortionate for the time and place, especially since there was practically no currency, and the wizard usually required cash payment in advance.

When Abraham was old enough, he was sent to the mill with a bag of corn, and these journeys left upon his mind the most pleasing recollections of his boyhood. Thomas Lincoln had acquired a horse or two, and trips to the mill were made bare-back with the sack of grain or meal carried in front of the rider. After young Lincoln had learned to read he poured into the ears of companions on these mill rides everything he had read.[1]

A year or two after the coming of Sarah Lincoln, another school, about four miles away, was started by one Azel W. Dorsey.[2] It was exactly like that of Andrew Crawford except that Dorsey did not try to 'learn manners' to the children. Abraham went to this school for a short time.[3] A schoolmate tells us that he was 'long and tall . . . wore low shoes, short socks and his britches made of buckskin' were so short that they left 'bare and naked 6 or more inches of Abe Lincoln's shin bone.'[4] The school books from which the teacher gave out his lessons were the Bible, Webster's or Dilworth's *Spelling Book*, Pike's *Arithmetic* and a song book.[5]

It was at Dorsey's school that he perfected that clear, distinct chirography, so like that of Washington and Jefferson; and here too he learned to spell with that accuracy which was to become a tradition in the neighborhood. He did all the writing for the family and indeed for everybody in the settlement.[6] Even more important to his avid mind was the fact that he learned to read with ease and fluency.

So ended the education of Abraham Lincoln in schools, except

[1] Statement of Henry Brooner: Hobson, 19.

[2] The Christian name of this teacher is given in most biographies of Lincoln as 'Hazel'; but it was Azel W. The cause of this error was that in the letters and statements made by old settlers, acquaintances of the Lincolns, the name 'Hazel' Dorsey is given. This well illustrates the corruption of names and words by the pioneers. Dorsey was the first coroner of Spencer County. *Hist. W., S. & P. Cos.*, Ind., 278. He was one of nine men to contribute $250 for the building of a bridge near Rockport. *Ib.*, 279.

[3] John Hanks to Herndon, June 13, 1865. Also Grigsby's statement. Weik MSS.

[4] Grigsby's statement, Sept. 12, 1865. Weik MSS. Grigsby says that all children were thus dressed: 'This was our school dress, our Sunday dress and every day dress.'

[5] *Ib.*, and Mrs. Moore's [Matilda Johnston] statement. Weik MSS.

[6] Mentor Graham to Herndon, July 15, 1865. Weik MSS. Also *Campaign Life of Lincoln:* John C. Scripps, 2.

This took little time, since mails were infrequent and expensive, the postage for a letter often amounting to forty cents. The pens were of goose-quill, and pokeberry juice served as ink. Levering, 83.

for a short and broken attendance in 1826 at a similar school taught by William Sweeney.[1] Including the two schools in Kentucky the boy went to school for less than a year. 'His father has offten told me,' relates John Hanks, that Abraham 'had not gone to School one year in all his life;' [2] and Lincoln himself, long afterward said the same thing.[3] Nathaniel Grigsby thinks that Lincoln went to the Indiana schools for not less than eighteen months, altogether; [4] but Dennis Hanks insists that 'he got about Six Months Schooling while he lived in Indiana,' [5] and this estimate is probably the more accurate.

There was, indeed, no reason for him to go longer to these backwoods teachers — they 'could do him no further good; he went to school no more.' [6]

In the Indiana schools he excelled, it appears, particularly in spelling and could 'spell down' the whole class when, at the close of the school every Friday,[7] the older children were placed in line against the log wall for a contest in spelling.[8] He was unselfish with his proficiency. One day he showed a girl schoolmate, Anna C. Roby, the proper letter in the word 'defied,' by covertly placing a finger on his eye.[9]

He was notably studious in everything [10] — 'head and Shoulders above us all,' confesses Dennis Hanks.[11] He would help the other pupils, 'would learn us get our cip[h]ers.' [12] His stepmother tells us that, when at home, Abraham 'cyphered on

[1] *Hist. W., S. & P. Cos.*, Ind., 413. This is another example of mispronunciation. The settlers called Sweeney, 'Swaney' and so gave the name to Herndon. The biographies, following his MSS., have said that William Swaney was the third teacher of Lincoln in Indiana.

[2] John Hanks to Herndon, June 13, 1865. Weik MSS.

[3] Autobiography, 2. [4] Grigsby's statement. Weik MSS.

[5] Hanks's first Chicago statement. Weik MSS.

[6] Mrs. Allen Gentry's statement, Sept. 17, 1865. Weik MSS. Mrs. Gentry was a schoolmate of Lincoln and of the same age. Her maiden name was Anna C. Roby. *Hist. W., S. & P. Cos.*, Ind., 452.

[7] John Hoskins' statement, Sept. 16, 1865. Weik MSS.

[8] Hanks to Herndon, March 22, 1866. Weik MSS. And see George Cary Eggleston, 44–5.

[9] Mrs. Gentry's statement. Weik MSS.

[10] Grigsby's statement. Weik MSS.

[11] Hanks's Charleston statement. Weik MSS.

[12] *Ib.*

boards when he had no paper or no slate and when the board would get too black he would Shave it off with a drawing Knife and go on again: When he had paper he put his sums down on it.'[1] He made a copy-book by sewing together blank sheets which Dennis Hanks gave him: 'I bought the paper [and] gave it to Abe.'[2] In this he did his work in arithmetic, scribbling at three places this legend:

'Abraham Lincoln, his hand and pen
he will be good but God knows when.'[3]

He early showed that kindness of heart which distinguished him throughout life. At Crawford's school the boy reproved other children for cruelty to animals, particularly the placing of glowing coals on backs of turtles; and, even then, wrote 'short sentences' against it.[4] While at Dorsey's school he wrote poetry. 'Abe took it up of his own accord,' relates Grigsby. He kept this up at Sweeney's too, and at both schools also wrote 'compositions against Cruelty to animals,' which barbarity seems to have been a favorite practice of his schoolmates, and young Lincoln's particular aversion. Indeed, revulsion at brutality, sympathy for the suffering, animals as well as humans, constituted the dominant note of his character, even in boyhood. He always came to school good humored and laughing and 'he scarcely ever quarreled.'[5]

He continued to write poetry as well as prose compositions long after his school days were over, it appears, and took his pieces 'straight' to the interested neighbor, William Wood, for comment and criticism. Even thirty-seven or thirty-eight years afterward, Wood could remember that one of Abraham's compositions was 'a poem' entitled 'The Neighborhood broil.'[6] The copy-book in which his school figuring was done, contains these lines in his youthful hand:

[1] Mrs. Lincoln's and Grigsby's statements. Weik MSS.

[2] Hanks's Charleston statement. Weik MSS.

[3] A leaf of this book is among the Weik MSS. The same inscription is in the Mordecai Lincoln copy of Bailey's *Dictionary*, 'Mordecai' being in place of 'Abraham' and 'you' in place of 'God.'

[4] Mrs. Lincoln's and Grigsby's statements. Weik MSS.

[5] Grigsby's statement. Weik MSS.

[6] Wood's statement. Weik MSS.

'Time what an empty vapor tis
And days, how swift they are
Swift as an Indian arrow
Fly on like a shooting star
The present moment just, is here
Then slides away in haste
That we can never say they're ours
But only say they're past.' [1]

The ability to read meant more to him, however, at this period of his development than did all else acquired at school. It opened to him the world of books — a world hitherto closed to him, well-nigh unknown, indeed. From this time forward, reading was the passion of the youth and, as will be seen, continued for more than twenty years to be the passion of the man.

About the time he learned to read, the boy was big enough to do work upon the ungracious farm, and to labor for others, his earnings going to the father, a legal right which Thomas Lincoln exacted rigidly until Abraham reached the full age of twenty-one. He worked for several of the small farmers of the settlement, for Romine, for Wood, for Taylor, for Crawford, for Turnham, ploughing, making rails, 'daubing' with mud the chinks between the logs of the cabins.[2]

By 1824 Lincoln and Hanks had 'a Bout 10 acres of corn and a Bout 5 acres of wheat 2 acres of oates one acre of medow;' and there was 'Very Little Change to 1830' in this proportion, says Hanks, who asserts that 'I No Exacly for I helped Do it.' [3] They kept some live stock too, but made little in that way. 'We Raised Sheep and Cattle But they Did not fecth Much Cows and Calfes was onely worth 6 Dollars Corn 10 cts wheat 25 [cents] at that time.' [4] So there was need for Abraham to work for other farmers or for anybody who would employ him.

Between Thomas Lincoln and his son, so different in intellect, character and appearance, there was little sympathy or understanding; and for some reason the father treated Abraham

[1] A. H. Chapman to Herndon, Oct. 8, 1865. Weik MSS.; also in Barrett Collection.

[2] Statements of Wood, Mrs. Crawford and Green B. Taylor. Weik MSS.; J. W. Lamar: Hobson, 22.

[3] Hanks to Herndon, Jan. 26, 1866. Weik MSS.

[4] Hanks to Herndon, Jan. 6, 1866. Weik MSS.

roughly. Sometimes a blow from the old man's fist would hurl the boy 'a rod.' [1] 'I have Seen his father Nock him Down of the fence when a Stranger would call for Information to NeighBour house,' testifies Dennis Hanks, who adds that 'the Old Man Loved his Childern.' [2] Thomas Lincoln also thrashed the lad, who took his punishment in silence, tears the only outward sign of what he felt and thought.[3]

All this led Dennis Hanks to doubt whether 'Abe Loved his farther Very well or Not,' and to conclude that 'I Dont think he Did.' For that matter Dennis was not certain of Abraham's affection for any of his relatives, then or thereafter. 'When he was with us he Seemed to think a great Deal of us But I thought Sum times it was hipocritical But I am Not Shore.' But Hanks is sure about the father. He 'Loved his Relitives Do anything for them he could No Better Man than Old Tom Lincoln.' [4] A. H. Chapman, son-in-law of Dennis Hanks, says: 'Thos. Lincoln never showed by his actions that he thought much of his son Abraham when a boy. He treated him rather unkindly than otherwise, always appeared to think much more of his stepson John D. Johnston than he did of his own son Abraham.' [5]

The father's ill-treatment of the son seems the more extraordinary in view of Abraham's remarkably good nature; for he was conspicuously obliging, eager to please everybody, his parents most of all. 'Abe was a good boy . . . the best boy I ever saw,' declares his stepmother. 'I can say,' she continues, 'what scarcely one woman, a mother can say in a thousand . . . Abe never gave me a cross word or look and never refused . . . to do anything I requested [of] him. I never gave him a cross word in all my life. . . . His mind and mine, what little I had, seemed to run together — move in the same channel.' [6] Abraham's devotion to Sarah Lincoln, whom he always called 'mama,' is

[1] Hanks's second Chicago statement. Weik MSS.

[2] Hanks to Herndon, Jan. 26, 1866. Weik MSS.

[3] Hanks's second Chicago statement. Weik MSS.

[4] Hanks to Herndon, Jan. 26, 1866. Weik MSS.

[5] A. H. Chapman to Herndon, Sept. 28, 1865. Weik MSS. Chapman adds: 'But after Abe was grown up and had made his mark in the world the old man appeared to be very proud of him.'

[6] Mrs. Lincoln's statement. Weik MSS.

striking. Many years later he told Chapman of 'the encouragement he always had received from his Step Mother' and declared that 'she had been his best Friend in this world and that no Son could love a Mother more than he loved her.' [1]

It cannot be too often stated that cheerful friendliness was the most striking feature of his personality — so striking, that it is noted with emphasis in all accounts given by acquaintances and observers of Abraham Lincoln in those days. He was 'Kindly disposed toward Everybody and Everything,' asserts Nathaniel Grigsby; [2] and his step-sister, Matilda Johnston, testifies that he was 'good to me, good to all. . . . Abe seemed to love Everybody and Everything; he loved us all and Especially mother.' [3] Once he picked up a drunken man whom he saw sleeping in the snow and carried him home,[4] a noteworthy performance since, usually, no attention was then paid to such not infrequent cases.

The mystery of the father's attitude towards Abraham is deepened by the unanimous and positive testimony to the placid character of Thomas Lincoln. Dennis Hanks, who was devoted to him, describes him as a 'good humored, sociable man who took the world easy, loving everybody and everything.' [5] Dennis Hanks's son-in-law declares that Thomas Lincoln was 'remarkable peaceable . . . good natured;' [6] John Hanks says that 'happiness was the end of life with him,' [7] and Nathaniel Grigsby recalls that he was 'happy, lived Easy and contented.' [8]

Yet from his point of view, Thomas Lincoln was, perhaps, not without some excuse for his harshness; for certain it is that Abraham was so absorbed with books that he showed no love for work with his hands, and was not quick to take up any physical task. 'Farming, grubbing, hoeing, making fences,' as John Hanks describes the boy's work,[9] had no attraction for him. He would carry a book with him when he had to go

[1] Chapman to Herndon, Oct. 8, 1865. Weik MSS.
[2] Grigsby's statement. Weik MSS. [3] Mrs. Moore's statement. Weik MSS.
[4] John Hanks to Herndon, June 13, 1865. Weik MSS.
[5] Hanks's Chicago statements. Weik MSS.
[6] Chapman's narrative. Weik MSS. [7] Lamon, 15.
[8] Grigsby's statement. Weik MSS.
[9] John Hanks to Herndon, June 13, 1865. Weik MSS.

to work, and over its pages he would pore when rest time came.[1]

Even the alertly partial Dennis Hanks admits that Abraham 'was lazy — a very lazy man. He was always reading, Scribbling, writing, ciphering, writing Poetry,' etc.[2] This too is the testimony of his step-sister: 'Abe was not energetic except in one thing — he was active and persistent in learning — read everything he could — ciphered on boards, on the walls.' [3] The son-in-law of Dennis Hanks declares that 'Lincoln was not industrious as a worker on the farm or at any kind of manual labor' and that 'he only showed industry in the attainment of knowledge.' [4]

Of young Lincoln's dislike of work John Romine, a neighbor, asserts: 'He worked for me, [but] was always reading and thinking, I used to get mad at him. . . . I say Abe was awful lazy. he would laugh and talk and crack jokes and tell stories all the time didn't love work but did dearly love his pay. . . . Lincoln said to me one day that his father taught him to work but never learned him to love it.' [5] 'He was no hand to pitch in at work like killing snakes,' says Mrs. Josiah Crawford, 'but he would take hold of his work as camely [calmly] and pleasant as his manner was other ways.' [6]

The distasteful toil in field and wood was lightened by Abraham's fun and wit; and, although he had no voice for singing, he would join the other hands in shouting the songs of the time and place — in the language of Dennis Hanks, 'Hail Collumbia Hap[py] Land if you aint Broke I will Be Damned,' or 'the turbentuck [turbaned Turk] that Scorns the world and Struts aBout with his whiskers curld for No other Man But himSelf to see and all Such as this.' [7] Other and rougher songs there were. Nathaniel Grigsby tells us that: 'we sung what is called carnel Songs and love songs. i cannot repeat any of them at this time

[1] Grigsby's statement. Weik MSS.
[2] Hanks's Charleston statement. Weik MSS.
[3] Mrs. Moore's statement. Weik MSS.
[4] Chapman's narrative. Weik MSS.
[5] Romine's statement. Weik MSS.
[6] Mrs. Crawford to Herndon, Sept. 7, 1866. Weik MSS.
[7] Hanks to Herndon, Dec. 24, 1865. Weik MSS.

we sung a song called Barbra allen also we sung the Silk Merchant daughter and others.' [1]

Hanks recalls that, 'Abe gaust [used] to try to sing pore old Ned But he Never could Sing Much;' [2] but Mrs. Crawford, who had an uncommonly strong memory,[3] says that Lincoln 'use to sing one was cauled John adconsons [Anderson's] lementation and one that was cauled William riley and one that was made about gineral Jackson and John adams . . . though I can't memorise but verry little of any of them he sang but verry little when he was about the house.' [4] Mrs. Crawford dwells upon John Anderson's Lamentation and insists that it was the song which Abraham sang most frequently. It was a commonplace and badly written jingle about the death of Anderson's wife, his condemnation to be hanged, the destitution of his children, all due to 'much intoxication.'

So the tall, bony youth, with a coonskin cap on his head and clad in deerskin shirt and homemade trousers [5] which were still always far too short, exposing many inches of 'sharp, blue and narrow' shins,[6] went about the countryside doing, in languid fashion, the jobs he was hired to do, or working reluctantly on his father's stumpy farm; but always cracking jokes, telling stories, joining, though poorly, in the songs of the other workers; and, whenever his father or employer was not about, making speeches to his fellows. Strangely enough Abraham did not care for fishing or hunting,[7] rarely joining the pursuit of even coon and turkey,[8] although, boasts Dennis Hanks, 'we sure were excellent bow shots — a squirrel couldnt escape.' [9]

Reading, however, was the outstanding phase of Lincoln's

[1] Grigsby to Herndon, Jan. 21, 1866. Weik MSS. Versions of Barbara Allen and The Silk Merchant's Daughter are in *English Folk Songs from the Southern Appalachians:* Campbell and Clark, 90, 186.

[2] Hanks to Herndon, Dec. 24, 1865. Weik MSS.

[3] It was she who gave Herndon, from memory, the exact wording of the 'Chronicles of Reuben,' thirty-six years after that satire was written. See p. 92, *infra.*

[4] Elizabeth Crawford to Herndon, Feb. 21, 1866. Weik MSS. 'William Riley' was a well-known ballad of English origin, but 'John Anderson' is not to be confused with Burns' verses of the same title, nor with George J. Bennet's 'John Anderson's gane.'

[5] Hobson, 22.

[6] Romine's statement. Weik MSS.

[7] Chapman's narrative. Weik MSS.

[8] Grigsby's statement. Weik MSS.

[9] Hanks's Charleston statement. Weik MSS.

life at this time. Much as he loved pranks with other youths, he would forego their jollity and lose himself in some new volume upon which he chanced. 'Whilst other boys were idling away their time,' says a schoolmate and companion, 'Lincoln was studying his books. . . . He read and thoroughly read his books whilst we played.' [1] But there was little if any studying by the wavering light from logs in the fireplace or from the dim glow of turnip candle. On the contrary, he studied in the daytime, says his stepmother; 'didn't after night much, went to bed early, got up early and then read.' [2]

Thus he consumed the scanty store of books brought to the Lincoln cabin by his stepmother, when she came to Pigeon Creek near Christmas time, 1819, wrought in cabin and surroundings the miracle we have witnessed, and rescued the children from the dirt accumulated since their mother died a year before. There had been a few books in her Kentucky household and, although Sarah Lincoln could not read, she knew the value of them, it seems, and brought them with her. There were but four or five volumes — *Robinson Crusoe*, *Pilgrim's Progress*, *Sinbad the Sailor*, *Æsop's Fables*.[3] It appears that this was the first time a Bible found a place in the cabin, for Hanks records that 'Thomas Lincoln brought the Bible in 1818 or 19.' [4]

On March 2, 1821, Congress extended the time for making payments on government land bought by settlers under the Act of 1800, and on September 12, Thomas Lincoln claimed his right under that act.[5] There the matter rested for six years. As the summer opened the Lincoln cabin was cheered by a wedding within the family. Dennis Hanks married Elizabeth Johnston [6] who, if she was the eldest of Sarah Lincoln's children, could not

[1] Mrs. Chapman's statement; Grigsby's statement. Weik MSS.

[2] Mrs. Lincoln's statement, Sept. 8, 1865. Weik MSS.

[3] This was a fairly large library for a pioneer cabin. As late as 1833 in a richer and more advanced part of the state, a large library consisted of *Pilgrim's Progress*, *Robinson Crusoe*, Weems's *Washington*, Weems's *Marion*, a *History of the United States*, an abridged *English History*, Cowper's *Poems* and the Bible. Turpie, 20.

[4] Hanks's Charleston statement. Weik MSS.

[5] Declaration No. 1964. Lincoln signed his name to this paper. General Land Office Records, Interior Department, Washington.

[6] June 9, 1821. Marriage Register, Spencer Co., Indiana.

possibly have been more than fifteen years of age.[1] It is well-nigh certain that they continued to live with the Lincolns, since the husband makes no mention of their having gone elsewhere.

In 1823, seven years after Thomas Lincoln came to Indiana and four years after his marriage to Sarah Johnston, he joined, by letter, the Pigeon Creek Baptist Church,[2] a congregation of Primitive Baptists,[3] the log house for which, one mile south of his cabin, he had helped to build in 1819.[4] He made the window frames, door casings and pulpit, we are told. This church house seems to have been a most pretentious building. In size it was twenty-six by thirty feet,[5] built of hewed logs, with fireplace and chimney of brick made by David Turnham, the mold for which was fashioned by Thomas Lincoln without a particle of iron, only wooden pegs being used.

To this church, after 1823, the family went when a preacher of that sect came to Pigeon Creek. When Abraham was in his fifteenth year, he would repeat to his companions and others, almost verbatim, the sermons he heard,[6] imitating the delivery of the preacher, for he was an excellent mimic.[7] His stepmother declares that 'he would hear sermons preached, come home, take the children out, get on a stump or log and almost repeat it word for word.' [8]

Although others of the family became members of the Pigeon Creek congregation, Abraham did not then or afterwards 'join church.' His stepmother explains that 'Abe had no particular religion — didn't think of that question at that time, if he ever did. He never talked about it.' [9] 'i cannot tel you what his notions of the bible were,' wrote Nathaniel Grigsby to Herndon; 'he talked about religion as other persons did but i do not now

[1] Her parents were married March 13, 1806.

[2] Records of Little Pigeon Creek Baptist Church, in possession of Samuel Alley of Buffaloville, Ind.

[3] Hanks to Herndon, no date, but 1866. Weik MSS.

[4] Hobson, 22.

[5] Murr: *Indiana Magazine of History*, XIII, 342.

[6] Statements of Mrs. Moore and Dennis Hanks. Weik MSS.

[7] Chapman's statement. Weik MSS., and Lamon, 55.

[8] Mrs. Lincoln's statement; and Hanks to Herndon, no date, but 1866. Weik MSS.

[9] Mrs. Lincoln's statement. Weik MSS.

his view on religion he never made any profession while in Ind[iana] that i now of.'[1] Mrs. Josiah Crawford, who knew all the Lincoln family well, in answer to a direct question writes: that she 'never heard of his ever making any such pretensions. I dont think he ever did though he seemed to be A well wisher he went to meeting some times and was well behaved.'[2] And Dennis Hanks avers that 'as to his perticlur views in Religion I cant tell But I Dont think he held any Views Very Strong.' But, Dennis adds, 'when he went to church he allways could tell the tex.'[3]

There is sharp dispute as to the extent of his reading of the Bible, Dennis Hanks asserting that 'Lincoln didnt read the Bible half as much as [is] said,' and that although 'he did read it, I though[t] he never believed it and think so still.'[4] Mrs. Lincoln confirms Hanks's testimony: 'Abe read the bible some, though not as much as said.'[5] On the other hand Grigsby declares that 'he was a great talker on the scriptures and read it a great deal;'[6] and Grigsby is supported by Lincoln's later literary style.

But, reports Dennis Hanks, 'He Never would Sing any Religious Songs it apered to me that it Did not Souit him.'[7] These songs were 'lined out' to the congregation by the preacher from Dupuy's[8] *Song Book*, the favorites being 'Oh when shall I see Jesus,' 'How tedious and tasteless the hours,' 'Jesus my all to heaven has gone' and 'Come thou fount of every blessing.'[9]

The books at home exhausted, he ranged the countryside in search of more, an intellectual prowler for the sustenance of the printed page. His step-mother asserts that 'Abe read all the

[1] Grigsby to Herndon, Jan. 21, 1866. Weik MSS.

[2] Mrs. Crawford to Herndon, Feb. 21, 1866. Weik MSS.

[3] Hanks to Herndon, no date. Weik MSS.

[4] Hanks's Charleston statement. Weik MSS.

[5] Mrs. Lincoln's statement. Weik MSS.

[6] Grigsby to Herndon, Jan. 21, 1866. Weik MSS.

[7] Hanks to Herndon, 'Aprail' 2, 1866. Weik MSS.

[8] The letters and statements of the pioneers to Herndon uniformly give the title of this volume as Dupree's *Song Book* — another example of slovenly pronunciation.

[9] Hanks to Herndon, 'Aprail' 2, 1866; and Grigsby to Herndon, Jan. 21, 1866. Weik MSS.

books he could lay his hands on.'[1] In 1823 when Abraham was fourteen years of age, Levi Hall who had married Nancy Hanks, aunt of Nancy Lincoln and mother without marriage of Dennis Hanks, came with his family to the Pigeon Creek settlement.[2] They brought the copy of Bailey's *Etymological Dictionary*,[3] which Mordecai Lincoln had bought in 1793. The fact that this dictionary was at his hand must be borne in mind while considering the books read by Lincoln during the years that he remained in Indiana.[4]

Several books were discovered by the eager youth and made his intellectual property; for, as we shall presently see, Lincoln remembered all he read. Only six of these volumes will here be noted, however, since the influence of these was determinative.

From some source and in some way he got hold of a copy of Grimshaw's *History of the United States*.[5] Of all the American histories in one volume published at that time none had such peculiar qualities as that by William Grimshaw.[6] The first chapter explains the advances made in astronomy, geography, and navigation; and, thus, the reader has before him at the start the existing condition of the world. Then follows the account

[1] Mrs. Lincoln's statement; Graham to Herndon, July 15, 1865. Weik MSS.

[2] Hanks to Herndon, March 12, 1866. Weik MSS.

Levi Hall and his wife Nancy, mother of Dennis Hanks, died while in Indiana and were buried close to the grave of Nancy Lincoln and Betsy Sparrow. 'The woman was Side by Side Abes mother in the Midle first my aut which was Thomas Sparrows wife on one Side of Abes mother and my mother on the othe[r] Side Levy Hall on the Side of his wife which wa[s] my mother and Thomas Sparrow on the Side of his wife which was my ant [and] the 5 togeather.' Hanks to Herndon, no date. Weik MSS.

[3] 'Hall brought the Dictionary to Indiana.' Hanks's Charleston statement. Weik MSS.

[4] On the inside cover of this volume is written in Lincoln's early handwriting, 'Abraham Lincoln his book, bought in the year of our Lord 1795.' Mordecai Lincoln has signed his name in four places. See p. 21, *supra*. Bailey's *Dictionary*, first published in 1721, was very popular and at least twenty-five editions were printed. It is said that Pitt the younger studied this dictionary word for word. It included all English words without regard to their vogue or repute, and is much superior to Johnson's *Dictionary*, published in 1755. Indeed, Johnson used an interleaved copy of Bailey in the preparation of his own work.

[5] 'Abe read I think Grimshaws History of the U[nited] S[tates].' Mrs. Moore's statement. Weik MSS.

[6] There were no less than fifteen *Histories of the United States*, each in one volume, and by different authors, published up to 1825; and there were three of two or more volumes. Grimshaw's *History* was published in Philadelphia and ran through fifteen large editions.

of the discovery of America and the development of the colonies.

Quickly the author reaches the subject of slavery, bitterly condemning it. 'What a climax of human cupidity and turpitude! . . . The colonists . . . place the last rivet to the chains!' Throughout the little volume the student is not permitted to lose sight of the shackle and the lash. The early New England persecutions are set forth in wrathful terms and an earnest plea made against intolerance. The causes of the Revolution are stated clearly, the patriot writings named, the War for Independence and later events described. The book ends with the cession of Florida to the United States; and, as a climax, the progress of literature, science and art is described.

The very last paragraph reads: 'Let us not only declare by words, but demonstrate by our actions, that " all men are created equal; that they are endowed by their creator, with the same inalienable rights: that among these are life, liberty and the pursuit of happiness." Let us venerate the instruction of that great and amiable man to whom, chiefly, under Providence, the United States are indebted for their liberties; the world for a common hero: "That there exists an indissoluble union between virtue and happiness, between duty and advantage."'

Abraham had worked for David Turnham, who lived near Grandview on the Ohio. Turnham, six years older than Lincoln, was a prosperous farmer, a Justice of the Peace and a man of uncommon ability.[1] As will presently appear, he had much influence on Lincoln's life. He owned the *Revised Laws of Indiana;* and sometime before he left the State, Lincoln borrowed this formidable volume of nearly five hundred long pages and read it repeatedly and with care. This was the first law book he ever read.[2] It contains the Declaration, the Constitution, the first twelve Amendments, the Virginia Act of cession of the Northwest Territory, the Ordinance of 1787, the Act admitting Indiana, and the first State Constitution. Then follow about four

[1] David Turnham was born Aug. 2, 1803, near Lebanon, Tenn., and came to Spencer County about 1818, settling near Grandview and 'becoming one of the foremost men of the county, and also a public official.' *Hist. W., S. & P. Cos.*, Ind., 562.

[2] Grigsby to Herndon, Oct. 25, 1865, Weik MSS.; Turnham to Herndon, Oct. 12, 1865; *Lincoln the Litigant:* William H. Townsend, 40.

hundred pages of laws on every subject which then required legislation — rights and remedies, crimes and punishments, courts and procedure, offices and fees, and all the machinery of civil government. Through this volume Lincoln acquired a fair understanding of the elements of law and government.

During this period, too, he read another book which had more and greater qualities making for general culture than any one volume he is positively known to have read. This volume was popularly called 'Scott's Lessons.' [1] Its formal title was *Lessons in Elocution, or Selections of Pieces in Prose and Verse for the Improvement of Youth in Reading and Speaking*, by William Scott, of Edinburgh. The book opens with short essays upon public speaking, the object of which should be to convey a 'precise idea.' Scott urges simplicity and intelligence of gesture, distinctness of enunciation, right placing of emphasis, pausing at the end of one sentence before beginning the next, and other items of the technique of delivery.

Then come what the compiler calls 'Lessons in Reading,' beginning with five pages of maxims. Brief selections from the classics follow, mostly fables and parables, but including essays on points of character and conduct, with sketches of Alfred, Catiline, Cæsar, Elizabeth, and other historic characters. Excerpts from many poems are next; and then a good selection of pieces for recitation, including parts of speeches by the Earl of Chatham, Lord Mansfield, Cicero, and Demosthenes, as well as the imaginary addresses of Hannibal and other commanders to their armies. Hamlet's advice to the players is printed as prose, as is the appeal of Brutus after Cæsar's death, Hotspur's soliloquy, and Falstaff's praise of sack. Antony's Oration, Hamlet's analysis of death, and the exhortations of Henry V before Harfleur and Agincourt, are given. Short and pointed quotations are made illustrative of various forms of speech — antithesis, climax, enunciation, query, and the like.

Lincoln is known to have studied the *Kentucky Preceptor*, a compilation by an unknown hand and not unlike Scott's *Lessons* in general contents. It contained short essays on Credulity, Haughtiness, Industry, and Indulgence; one on Liberty and

[1] Lamon, 37.

Slavery, but without reference to negro slavery as then found in the United States; anecdotes of Indians; Gouverneur Morris's Funeral Oration 'over the corpse' of General Hamilton, and also Eliphalet Nott's oration on Hamilton; Nott's Baccalaureate Sermon in Union College, May 1, 1805; Jefferson's inaugural speech, 1801; and scenes lifted from English playwrights and poets — all without indicating the author, except in one instance, where Thompson, the poet, is named. It was a school reader belonging to Josiah Crawford, of whom Lincoln borrowed it, and Mrs. Crawford, in giving the book to Herndon, stated that out of it 'Lincoln learned his speaches.' [1]

The other two books worthy of note, which are known to have been read by Lincoln while in Indiana, are Weems's *Life of Washington* and the same writer's *Life of Franklin*.[2] It has not been discovered where he got the *Life of Franklin*, but he borrowed Weems's *Washington* from Josiah Crawford, a young farmer of the neighborhood, who had brought the book with him from Kentucky. Abraham worked for Crawford, at times, having 'daubed' his fifteen feet square log cabin when the Crawfords arrived in 1824.[3] It seems that the youth left the book where rain injured it, a calamity of which he promptly told Crawford, who gave him the volume and he 'pulled fodder a day or two for it.' [4]

Just when Lincoln read these six books cannot be positively determined. Mrs. Josiah Crawford says that he read Weems's *Washington* in 1829, when he was twenty years of age,[5] and the likelihood is strong that he studied all the books named during his last four years in Indiana.

[1] This volume is in the collection of Oliver R. Barrett, of Chicago, with Herndon's note on its history. Herndon gave it, sometime before 1887, to J. E. Remsburg, of Oak Mills, Kan. It is the third edition published at Lexington, Ky., 1812, by Maccoun, Tilford & Company.

[2] Statement of Wesley Hall to J. Edward Murr, in his 'Lincoln in Indiana,' *Indiana Magazine of History*, XIII, 325.

[3] Elizabeth Crawford's statement. Weik MSS.

[4] *Ib.* In 1865, thirty-six years after Lincoln borrowed Weems's *Washington*, the Crawford library had grown to twelve or fifteen volumes, including two Bibles, four hymn books, *Great Events of America*, *Pioneers of the New West*, Grace Truman, and a small Webster's *Dictionary*. Herndon's account of his interview with Elizabeth Crawford, Sept. 16, 1865. Weik MSS.

[5] Elizabeth Crawford's statement. Weik MSS.

Such were the volumes, each of which it should be remembered Lincoln read so thoroughly that he could repeat, word for word, parts that best pleased him. 'When he came across a passage that struck him he would write it down on boards if he had no paper and keep it there till he did get paper, then he would rewrite it, look at it, repeat it. He had a copy-book, a kind of scrap-book in which he put down all things and thus preserved them.' [1]

At Rockport, where Abraham often went, he made the acquaintance of John Pitcher, the first resident attorney of Rockport, who afterwards became prosecuting attorney for Spencer County.[2] Pitcher had a good library which, as he declared sixty years later, included the 'standard works of that day,' as well as law books; and the use of this library was given to young Lincoln.[3] The youth also went to Boonville, some twelve or fourteen miles distant from the Lincoln cabin, and there saw the prosecuting attorney for Warrick County, John A. Brackenridge, who is said to have had an immense library for the time and place, consisting of at least four hundred and fifty-seven volumes.[4] Inference has been made that Lincoln borrowed many of these volumes and frequently visited the house of Brackenridge to read his books and take counsel of him; but no evidence is adduced to support these speculations or to show that the lawyer even knew the backwoods youth.[5]

Along with the pleasing fiction of midnight study by the log fire, we must dismiss the unhappy legend that Thomas Lincoln

[1] Mrs. Lincoln's statement. Weik MSS.

The Act creating Spencer County provided that ten per cent from the sale of town lots should be used for the establishment and maintenance of a county library. But if this was done while Lincoln lived in Indiana it would appear that he never heard of such a store of books; for, says the historian of Spencer County, 'after 1820 Spencer County had, at Rockport, a public library of several hundred volumes of the standard works of the day. The name Lincoln does not once appear on the records as [a] borrower.' *Hist. W., S. & P. Cos.*, Ind., 273.

[2] *Ib.*, 307.

[3] Pitcher's statement in O. C. Terry to Jesse W. Weik, July, 1888. Weik MSS.

[4] 'Lincoln's Boyhood in Indiana:' Roscoe Kiper, *Proceedings of Fourth Annual Conference on Indiana History*, 59–60. The size and importance of these libraries are the more striking, since lawyers in other parts of the State then relied wholly upon Espinasse's *Nisi Prius* and Peake's *Evidence*, which they carried with them when 'riding the circuit.' Smith, 19.

[5] See pages 90–1, *infra*.

interfered with Abraham's incessant reading. The father yielded to the influence of Sarah Lincoln, it appears, and did not disturb his son's devotion to books. 'As a usual thing,' says his wife, 'Mr. Lincoln never made Abe quit reading to do anything if he could avoid it. He would do it himself first . . . he himself felt the uses and necessities of education [and wanted] his boy Abraham to learn and he encouraged him to do it in all ways he could.' [1]

Sarah Lincoln makes the best case she can for her husband; but after Abraham had left the family in Illinois, the father's contempt for the studious habits of his son seems to have returned. 'I suppose Abe is still fooling hisself with eddication,' he complained to William G. Greene who chanced by what Greene calls the 'wretched abode' where Thomas and his wife lived in Coles County. 'I tried to stop it, but he has got that fool idea in his head, and can't be got out. Now I hain't got no eddication, but I get along far better than if I had;' and Thomas showed his visitor how he kept an account by making straight marks with a coal on a rafter and rubbing them out with a dish-rag: 'that thar's a heap better'n yer eddication.' [2] In Indiana, however, a boyhood companion of Lincoln, Wesley Hall, relates that, 'Old Tom couldn't read himself, but he wuz proud that Abe could, and many a time he'd brag about how smart Abe wuz to the folks around about.' [3]

Young Lincoln liked to tell what he knew — insisted on telling it. In fact, self-expression was indispensable to the youth, and he became a very geyser of loquacity, talking incessantly to all who would listen — and most were eager to hear him. For he never bored anybody. His talk was informing, to be sure; but it was witty too and full of humor. Nobody could resist his funny

[1] Mrs. Lincoln's statement. Weik MSS. [2] Whitney, I, 74–5.

[3] Hall's statement to Murr: *Indiana Magazine of History*, XIII, 325.

Hall's statement is somewhat dramatic, including a picturesque account of his having been lost in a snow-storm while riding home from mill, his chancing on the Lincoln cabin where he was warmly welcomed and stayed all night, Abraham reading, at his father's request, until bedtime and by the light of the log fire, the *Life of Franklin*. Hall gave this description to Mr. Murr more than sixty years after the incident happened, and when Hall was over eighty years old. Murr sets down the narrative exactly as he received it. While it is, obviously, strongly colored by Hall's imagination, as are most stories of the kind, there can be no reasonable doubt that something of the sort happened and that Lincoln surely did read a *Life of Franklin*.

stories, and he was as fond of jokes as he was of reading. Yet Mrs. Lincoln relates that when neighbors came to visit her: 'Abe . . . was a silent and attentive observer, never speaking or asking questions till they were gone and then he must understand everything — even to the smallest thing, minutely and exactly: he would then repeat it over to himself again and again, sometimes in one form and then in another and when it was fixed in his mind to suit him he became easy and he never lost that fact or his understanding of it. Sometimes he seemed pestered to give expression to his views and got mad almost at one who couldn't explain plainly what he wanted to convey.' [1] Dennis Hanks recalls that Abraham was 'a good listener to his superiors, bad to his inferiors — that is he couldn't endure jabber.' [2]

He was abnormally gregarious and, when not lost in the pages of some book, made shift to be where other people were, the larger the number the better he was pleased. Yet he did not seek crowds — indeed he shunned them, another of those contradictions of character which so often perplex the student of Lincoln, as they perplexed those who came in contact with him throughout his perplexing life.

Still he went to all the social gatherings — 'alway attended house raisings, log rolling corn shucking and workings of all kinds.' [3] There was a small prairie on the South Fork of Pigeon Creek and there members of the local militia gathered for muster.[4] Lincoln was always on hand at these jolly assemblages. And no other person in the now comparatively well populated settlement was so welcome everywhere, for he always was cheerful and tried to make others happy too.[5] No situation was too gloomy for his fun-making, no man so sour that Lincoln

[1] Mrs. Lincoln's statement. Weik MSS. It is obvious that there is much more of Herndon than there is of Sarah Lincoln in this interview. Herndon notes on the MS. that, at first, he had great difficulty in getting her to talk. The gossip of neighbors could have given the boy little food for questioning or thought, being, as such talk always was, chiefly about crops or hunting.

[2] Hanks's Charleston statement. Weik MSS.

[3] Grigsby to Herndon, Oct. 25, 1865. Weik MSS.

[4] Hanks to Herndon, April, 1866. Weik MSS. And see Welby: Thwaites, XII, 272; Turpie, 31.

[5] Grigsby to Herndon, Oct. 25, 1865; and Hanks's Charleston statement. Weik MSS.

could not make him laugh. Once with his father, he took produce to Troy in the all-wood wagon they had made for James Gentry. Heavy rain came on, the creek was swollen; drenched and cold, they staid all night at the house of J. W. Lamar. During the night wolves took nearly all the venison hams; but Abraham poked fun at the predicament and kept Lamar, who 'scarcely ever smiled,' rocking with laughter.[1]

Always he was surrounded by men and boys shouting with glee at his drollery, held by his charm, instructed by his information, interested in his reasoning. 'When he appeared in Company the boys would gather and cluster around him to hear him talk,' says Grigsby. 'He made fun and cracked his jokes making all happy.' Then, too, he 'naturally assumed the leadership of the boys.' But he was never dogmatic, it appears, never aggressive in his views, never turbulent or offensive in stating them, never insistent that others should think as he thought. 'He wounded no man's feelings' and even his jokes 'were at no man's expense.'[2] He was so good-natured that, coming on some boys stealing watermelons which Lincoln had raised, he 'sat down with us,' relates one of the culprits, 'cracked jokes, told stories and helped to eat the melons.'[3] All testify to Lincoln's honesty, too, and his absolute truthfulness. 'Men would swear on his simple word,' declares Joseph C. Richardson.

But 'Abe did not go much with the girls . . . didnt like girls much, too frivolous,' says Mrs. Allen Gentry, then Anna C. Roby, who saw as much of Lincoln at that time as any girl in the settlement except, of course, his sister and step-sisters.[4] His step-mother confirms Mrs. Gentry's opinion, saying: 'He was not very fond of girls.'[5] Joseph C. Richardson also relates that Abraham 'never seemed to care for the girls;'[6] and David Turnham bears witness that 'he did not seem to seek the company of the girls and when with them was rather backward.'[7] The girls liked him, however, because he was 'friendly, somewhat sociable,

[1] Hobson, 24. [2] Grigsby's statement. Weik MSS.
[3] Richardson's statement, Sept. 14, 1865. Weik MSS.
[4] Mrs. Gentry's statement. Weik MSS.
[5] Mrs. Lincoln's statement. Weik MSS.
[6] Richardson's statement. Weik MSS.
[7] Turnham to Herndon, Dec. 17, 1866. Weik MSS.

not so much so as we wanted him.' Certainly there was nothing attractive in Abraham's appearance, for he was 'a long, thin, leggy, gawky boy dried up and shriveled.'[1] Even by his sixteenth year he was '6 feet high' and 'bony and raw, dark skinned.'[2]

Lincoln began to make speeches as early as his fifteenth year.[3] He would mount a tree stump, or stand upon a fence and talk to his fellow workers, who would leave their jobs in fields or woods to listen. 'His father would come and make him quit, send him to work,' says his step-sister who saw and heard these incidents.[4] Her mother tells us the same thing. 'His father had to make him quit sometimes, as he would quit his own work to speak and made the other children as well as the men quit their work.'[5]

Of greater moment, however, than the fact that he made them at all, was the arrangement of his speeches and the style of his delivery. Considering the examples of exclamatory and emotional oratory furnished by preachers, lawyers, and candidates to whom he listened, the most reasonable explanation of young Lincoln's method and manner of speaking, is that he had taken Scott's *Lessons* seriously and that the advice of the Scotch schoolmaster was in harmony with his own thoughts on the subject. For all who heard him make these backwoods speeches, lay emphasis on the logical clearness of them and Lincoln's composure in delivery.

'He was calm, logical and clear alw[a]ys,' Dennis Hanks told Herndon.[6] Grigsby says the same thing; and adds that he 'was figurative in his Speeches, talk and conversation. He argued much from analogy and explained things hard for us to understand by stories, maxims, tales and figures. He would almost always point the lesson or idea by some story that was plain and near us that we might instantly see the force and bearing of what he said.'[7]

[1] Mrs. Gentry's statement. Weik MSS.
[2] Richardson's statement. Weik MSS.
[3] John Hanks to Herndon, June 13, 1865; and Mrs. Moore's statement. Weik MSS.
[4] Mrs. Moore's statement. Weik MSS.
[5] Mrs. Lincoln's statement. Weik MSS.
[6] Hanks's Charleston statement. Weik MSS.
[7] Grigsby's statement. Weik MSS.

The clearness and simplicity of these youthful speeches, so striking that all made note of and remembered those qualities, were partly the result of his writing and rewriting what he read and thought. Sometimes he wrote essays on weighty subjects. William Wood, then about forty-five years of age,[1] relates that one such paper, written in 1827 or 1828, was on 'national politics,' saying that 'the American government was the best form of Government in the world for an intelligent people, that it ought to be kept sacred and preserved forever; that general education should [be] fostered and carried all over the country; that the constitution should be [held] sacred, the union perpetuated, and the laws revered, respected and enforced.' [2]

Wood was so impressed by the essay that he gave it to the leading lawyer of Spencer County. 'I showed it to John Pitcher who was travelling over the circuit on law business and stopped at my house one night: he read it carefully and asked me where I got it. I told him that one of my neighbor boys wrote it: he couldn't believe it until I told him that Abe did write it. . . . Pitcher said to me "the world cant beat it." He begged for it — gave it to him and it was published.' [3]

Wood was a member of the United Brethren Church and a foe of hard drinking.[4] He was a subscriber for a temperance paper published in Ohio; and 'Abe used to borrow it, take it home and read it and talk it over with me. . . . One day Abe wrote a piece on Temperance and brought it to my house. I read it carefully over and over and the piece excelled for sound sense anything that my paper contained. I gave the article to one Aaron Farmer, a Baptist Preacher: He read it, it struck him: he said he wanted it to send to a Temperance paper in Ohio for publication: it was sent and published. I saw the printed piece, read it . . . over and over again.' [5]

One outstanding fact of Lincoln's life at this time is that, although his associates, and indeed everybody, drank a great deal of whisky, Abraham seldom touched liquor. To be sure he 'did drink his dram as well as all others did, preachers and Christians

[1] Wood died Dec. 28, 1867. Hobson, 52. [2] Wood's statement. Weik MSS.
[3] *Ib.* Unfortunately Wood could not remember 'what paper it got into.'
[4] Hobson, 51–2. [5] Wood's statement. Weik MSS.

included,' testifies Grigsby; [1] and his devoted friend and mentor, William Wood, reluctantly admits that 'Abe once drank as all people did here at that time.' [2] But this slight and casual drinking seems to have been entirely for the sake of comradeship and Lincoln's strong dislike of offending anybody.[3] Equally striking is the fact that, although profanity was general and intense, Lincoln never fell into that habit. 'I never knew him to swear,' testifies Wood; 'he would say to . . . other boys, leave off your boyish ways and be more like men.' Wood explains this attitude by concluding that 'Abe was always a man though a boy.' [4]

Yet, as we have seen, he was no prig; instead he was inordinately sociable, even familiar, and had faults extremely human, such as his love of a certain type of anecdote — a taste which he never overcame and the expression of which, as will appear, was so marked a feature of his manhood and so shocking to the eminent men among whom he did his historic work. Some of his boyhood companions got hold of a joke book; and, relates Nathaniel Grigsby, Abraham 'would read it to us out in the woods on Sunday.' Answering the question as to the title Grigsby says: '[I remember it] mighty well. It was the King's Jester — it was a book of funny stories.' [5] This little volume, *Quinn's Jests*, contained the stories and repartee of the English actor, James Quinn. The humor is heavy, the so-called jests

[1] Grigsby's statement. Weik MSS. [2] Wood's statement. Weik MSS.

[3] Lamon, 57. [4] Wood's statement. Weik MSS.

[5] Statement of Nathaniel Grigsby to William Fortune and General James C. Veatch in 1881, and by Mr. Fortune to the author, August 13, 1924.

Mr. Fortune, then a youth, had written a history of Warrick County, and accompanied General Veatch from Rockport, Ind., to Gentryville, to gather material for a book on Lincoln in Indiana, which General Veatch was preparing to write.

They talked with Nathaniel Grigsby, among others, who, after naming the books read by Lincoln as given in the biographies, said: 'There was another book that we boys got a lot of fun out of,' and in answer to questions, gave the account set out in the text.

Careful and prolonged search failed to discover such a book as 'The Kings Jester.' Among the books of jests in the British Museum was found, *Quinn's Jests or the Facetious Man's Pocket Companion, Containing every species of Wit, Humor and Repartee, with a Complete Collection of Epigrams, Bonmots, etc.*, published in London in 1766.

In the opinion of J. Christian Bay, of the John Crerar Library, Chicago, and of other experts, this is the book read by Lincoln to his boyhood companions in the woods of Spencer County, Indiana. J. Christian Bay to William Fortune, Nov. 5, 1922.

The conversion of *Quinn's Jests* into the 'King's Jester' is still another illustration of that careless pronunciation which prevailed among the pioneers.

often indecent and sometimes so filthy that they cannot now be reproduced.

In his seventeenth year his sister Sarah, then aged nineteen, married Aaron Grigsby,[1] son of a farmer and one of the important men in the settlement. Even then social distinctions were sharply drawn and upon the lines of property; and the Grigsbys were of the aristocracy of the backwoods. Abraham composed some doggerel in verse, which, it is said, was sung at the wedding by 'the Lincoln family.' It was a clumsy rhyme, telling, in eight verses, the story of the creation and marriage of Adam and Eve.

This bridal hymn of Sarah Lincoln argued that since woman was not made of man's feet he must not abuse her; nor should she 'rule him,' not having been taken from his head; but that he must protect her because 'she was taken from under Adam's arm.' [2] At the noisy wedding or thereafter, the Grigsby family did or said something which was strongly offensive to Lincoln. Thus was laid the materials of a feud, which was to be set blazing by a harsh circumstance two years later.

But in the meantime he adventured far, though briefly, into the world beyond the fifty-mile circuit of the Pigeon Creek settlement. He had seen something of river life, having been hired in 1825 by one James Taylor to help run a ferry boat across the Ohio from near the mouth of Anderson Creek.[3] Taylor had a farm, too, and when Lincoln was not taking travellers across the river, he ploughed, made fences, ground corn on the hand mill, and at 'hog killing time,' helped nearby farmers

[1] Grigsby's statement. Weik MSS. Also Hobson, 21. She was married in August, 1826. Chapman's Narrative. Weik MSS. The records of Spencer Co. show that the day was August 2.

On Sept. 13, 1826 (Marriage Register, Spencer Co., Ind.), 'Squire' Hall, married Mrs. Lincoln's youngest daughter, Matilda Johnston, and lived thenceforth in the Lincoln cabin. 'Squire' Hall, or Levi, Jr., was the son of Levi Hall and Nancy Hanks, mother of Dennis Hanks.

[2] Herndon, I, 48–9. This song and the account of it as stated in the text, were given in 1866 by Mrs. Josiah Crawford, who was at Sarah Lincoln's wedding. She says that Lincoln used to sing it and that it was 'sung at abrahams sisters wedding. I do not Know a linkern composed this song or not the first that I ever heard it was the linkern family sung it I rather think A L composed it him self but I am not certain. I know that he was in the habit of makeing songs and singing of them.' Elizabeth Crawford to Herndon, May 3, 1866. Weik MSS.

[3] Green B. Taylor's statement, Sept. 16, 1865; and that of Richardson, Weik MSS. Also Herndon, I, 60.

as well as Taylor — wielding the club, sousing the dead swine in barrels of scalding water, scraping the bristles and other incidents in the process.[1] As ferryman and farmer Abraham was paid six dollars a month, and as hog killer thirty-one cents a day in addition.[2]

Lincoln also built for himself a scow in which he would take travellers to passing steamers hailed in midstream. Another ferryman, John T. Dill, a Kentuckian, angered by this competition, haled Lincoln before a Kentucky Justice of the Peace, Samuel Pate, for running a ferry without a license. Lincoln said that he did not know that it was against the law to take passengers to steamboats in midstream, especially when the ferryboat was on the other side and the steamers would not land or wait. The plaintiff pointed out, however, that the jurisdiction of Kentucky ran to low water mark on the Indiana shore. But 'Squire' Pate decided that taking persons to passenger craft in midstream, was not 'setting them over' the river and, therefore, that Lincoln had not violated the statute. Abraham was deeply impressed and, thereafter, went to this rural court when cases were heard and decided. In such fashion began Lincoln's interest in the study and practice of the law.[3]

But running a ferryboat now and then, across the Ohio, taking an infrequent traveller to a steamer, ploughing, splitting rails and killing hogs for Taylor and others, gave Lincoln little more experience of human activities than Pigeon Creek had afforded. Heavy toil was the only lasting impression made upon him, for long years afterward, when one of the leaders of the Illinois Bar, he told Herndon that it 'was the roughest work a young man could be made to do.'[4] The boisterous life of the keel boatmen did not appeal to him — their heavy and continuous drinking of raw whisky, their loud and picturesque boasting made good by reckless and bloody fighting, even their fiddling and clamorous, hearty good cheer[5] did not attract him.

[1] Taylor's statement. Weik MSS. And see *First of the Hoosiers:* George Cary Eggleston, 54–5.

[2] Taylor's statement. Weik MSS.

[3] *Litigant:* Townsend, 34–9. [4] Herndon, I, 61.

[5] For excellent description by an eye witness of the Ohio keel boatmen see 'Historical

In his nineteenth year, however, the chance was offered to make a far journey; and the opportunity came as the result of Lincoln's good fellowship and integrity, and the friendship and confidence inspired by these qualities. The richest man in Carter Township was James Gentry, a native of North Carolina who in April, 1818, had come from Kentucky with his young wife to the Pigeon Creek settlement. He entered a thousand acres of land and afterward bought several hundred acres more. He had a large family, two of whom married into the family of another wealthy man, Gideon W. Romine.[1] Gentry soon began to keep a small stock of goods for sale at his farm house; [2] thus began the town of Gentryville.[3] Soon William David, a blacksmith, came [4] and in time a few cabins were built near by. Gentryville became the social as well as the trading centre of the countryside.

Gentryville was less than a mile and a half from the Lincoln cabin; and to the backwoods hamlet young Lincoln would speed like a homing pigeon when work was done for the day. For there gathered other youth and men who craved companionship and the story-telling, talk, and discussion which took place in country stores. About this time, one, William Jones, came from Vincennes [5] and opened a little store. Soon he and Lincoln became fast friends and Jones hired the boy to help him. But it was the village blacksmith who was 'Abes pertickler friend.' [6] Gentry and Jones formed a partnership, with Abraham sometimes assisting as man of all work.

As long as Gentry or Jones would keep the candles lighted and the log fire burning, Abraham would remain, talking, forever talking, relating his jokes, telling his rude and often unsavory

Writings of Judge Samuel Wilkeson:' *Pubs. Buffalo Hist. Socy.*, v, 179–81. See also Woods: Thwaites, x, 255. Sept. 18, 1821.

[1] *Hist. W., S. & P. Cos.*, Ind., 452, 558.

[2] In 1827 Gentry, who was very illiterate (Hobson, 24–5), took in as partners Gideon W. and Benjamin Romine, and opened a store at a crossing of the roads. 'Gentry started a cotton gin about 1824 . . . receiving patronage from a radius of thirty miles. Considerable cotton was raised. It grew well on new land.' *Hist. W., S. & P. Cos.*, Ind., 365–6.

[3] *Ib.*, 366. It was not entered of record as a town, however, until 1854.

[4] *Hist. W., S. & P. Cos.*, Ind., 366.

[5] Hanks to Herndon, no date, Weik MSS.

[6] *Ib.*, and Hanks to Herndon, March 22, 1866.

tales; flashing his kindly repartee, propounding his theories about everything. 'He was so odd, original and humorous and witty that all the People in town would gather around him,' Dennis Hanks told Herndon. 'He would Keep them there till midnight or longer telling Stories [and] cracking jokes. . . . I would get tired, want to go home, cuss Abe most heartily.' [1] And 'Sumtimes we Spent a Little time at grog piching waits,' says Dennis.[2]

Lincoln had great physical strength, so great that tales of his performances are well-nigh unbelievable. Long afterward one elderly person recalled that the young Hercules of Pigeon Creek bore away easily heavy posts which 'some of the men' were preparing to carry by means of bars.[3] 'Abe could sink an axe deeper in wood . . . He could strike with a mall a heavier blow than any man I ever saw,' testifies William Wood.[4] Stature, physical power, good humor, intellect, integrity, are the outstanding features of the picture of Abraham Lincoln during these years.

In April, 1828, James Gentry hired this strong, capable, and trustworthy youth to go with his son, Allen, on a flatboat loaded with produce to New Orleans, then the best market for such things as the upper Mississippi country had to sell.[5] The boat started from Gentry's landing on the Ohio, about three quarters of a mile from Rockport.[6] Lincoln acted as a bow hand, 'working the foremost oar and was paid eight dollars per month from the time of starting to his returning home.' [7] It was no ignorant lout but a fairly well-informed young person of grasping and absorbing mind, who, with quip and quiddity, droll story and quaint common sense, enlivened the hours, as Gentry's flatboat floated down the Ohio and Mississippi to the great Southern mart.

[1] Hanks's Charleston statement. Weik MSS.

[2] Hanks to Herndon, March 22, 1866. Weik MSS.

[3] Richardson's statement. Weik MSS. [4] Wood's statement. Weik MSS.

[5] These boats, made of the trunks of big poplar trees, were from sixty to eighty feet in length. Meat, corn, flour and the like made up the cargoes. Cockrum, 508–10. Allen Gentry was two years older than Lincoln.

[6] Mrs. Allen Gentry's statement. Weik MSS.

[7] Grigsby's statement. Weik MSS.

Nothing happened, it seems, to disturb that placid voyage until one night, when tied to the shore at the plantation of a Madame Duchesne, not far from New Orleans, a company of negroes armed with hickory clubs and bent on plunder, came upon the flatboat when the occupants were asleep. Aroused by the noise, Lincoln seized a club and furiously attacked the marauders. He knocked several into the river and the others fled, Lincoln and Gentry in hot pursuit. They, too, were wounded, it appears, for they were bleeding when they got on board again. Also they feared that the negroes would return; so they 'hastily swung into the stream and floated down the river till daylight.' [1]

So came Abraham Lincoln to New Orleans, the first city and the first place bigger than the Boonville or Rockport, Indiana, of 1828, he had ever seen. It was then a remarkable city of narrow streets, foreign-built houses, with colored stuccoes and iron railings, broad avenues lined by handsome houses, a cathedral, and immense warehouses for receiving, pressing, and storing cotton. From the levee, a much used causeway, could be seen nearly two miles of various descriptions of vessels, arks and flatboats from the north, steamboats still giving a sense of novelty, three-masters for foreign trade, with their broadsides to the shore — expressing the growing commerce of the river and people and offering 'one of the most singularly beautiful' sights that could be conceived.

At the market, the common place of meeting, could be found nuts and fruits of the tropics; fish from lake and gulf; sugar, grain, and meats. Lincoln saw and heard the bustle and heaving labor on the river front, sea-going vessels made ready, crews of strange speech. He could note the medley of people and dress — French, Spanish, Mexicans, Creoles, even Indians, and slaves, from the full negro through many degrees of mixed blood.[2] It all gave a new experience to the two youths from the backwoods of Indiana, but there is no evidence of the impression made upon Lincoln by this, his second contact with slavery.

[1] Nicolay and Hay, I, 44; Herndon, I, 63; Hobson, 25; also Mrs. Gentry's statement. Weik MSS.

'Lincoln was attacked by the Negroes — no doubt of this — Abe told me so.' Romine's statement. Weik MSS.

[2] Latrobe, II, 330–4.

The cargo sold, the young men returned to their Indiana homes in June,[1] making the journey up stream on one of the big and sumptuous steamboats of the time, the elder Gentry paying the fare. On Pigeon Creek Lincoln took up again the old routine, unchanged in speech or manner by his trip to the metropolis of the South. He was still the avid reader of books, the incessant talker, the bubbling fountain of good cheer.

But Gentryville no longer satisfied him; he had caught a glimpse of the world beyond Pigeon Creek, beyond Rockport and Boonville. The spell of the river had stolen over him; he wanted to be 'a steamboat man' on a big river craft like the one on which he had returned from New Orleans. In 1829, relates William Wood, 'Abe came to my house one day, and stood round about timid and shy. I knew he wanted something. I said to him, "Abe what is your care?" Abe replied, "Uncle, I want you to go to the River (the Ohio) and give me some recommendation to some boat." I remarked, "Abe, your age is against you. You are not 21 yet." "I know that, but I want a start," said Abe. I concluded not to go for the boys good.' [2]

So he stayed on at the Pigeon Creek cabin, doing the familiar work of the backwoods farm, felling trees, splitting rails, ploughing fields, helping Thomas Lincoln now and then in his casual carpentering. But he read and wrote more than ever, and lost no opportunity to hear speeches, especially legal arguments. When court was held in Rockport on the Ohio or at Boonville, county seats of Spencer and Warrick counties respectively, Lincoln would go,[3] making careful notes of all that was said and done.

These towns were mere villages, Boonville having some twenty cabins in which dwelt, perhaps, ninety or one hundred men, women, and children; and Rockport was but little larger. Evansville was then scarcely more important. The roads were wellnigh impassable except on foot or horseback, being mere open-

[1] Mrs. Gentry's statement. Weik MSS.
It took about two months to make the trip. Romine's statement. Weik MSS.

[2] Wood's statement. Weik MSS.

[3] Hanks's Charleston statement. Weik MSS.

ings through the woods.[1] Business before the courts at these county seats consisted mostly, as we have seen, of criminal and divorce cases. Suits for debt or on contract were trifling; but they were contested stoutly with much argument by the lawyers, some of whom wore queues tied in eelskins.[2] Lincoln listened to the wrangling and speeches of these legal combatants and attracted the notice of at least two of them.

As we have seen, one of these was John Pitcher of Rockport, with whom, according to Pitcher, the youth wanted to study law; but 'his father was too poor to spare him away from the farm and the mill.'[3] Near Boonville lived John A. Brackenridge

[1] In southern Indiana the roads were so indistinct that travellers often were lost. Esarey, 246.

The road through Indiana to Cincinnati was too bad for ordinary travel. Fordham, 152.

As late as 1823 even between Richmond and Indianapolis, the road was little more than a trail. Coffin, 81.

In 1826 there were only Indian trails through the forests from Randolph County to Fort Wayne. O. H. Smith, 81 (*infra*).

Even as late as 1847, the roads in Wayne County, perhaps the best in the state, were 'almost impassable.' Coffin, 50. And see Welby: Thwaites, XII, 213. Near New Harmony, Welby found roads impassable in the spring. *Ib.*, 267.

As late as 1835 a Methodist circuit-rider describes the road from Ohio to Indianapolis as 'terrible.' Brunson: *Wis. Hist. Coll.*, XV, 270–1.

[2] Smith, 6, 130.

Examples of litigation at that time, as given by Judge Smith in his *Early Indiana Trials and Sketches*, are stealing a log chain, hog stealing, slander, assault, libel, murder, malpractice and the like. There were few cases for debt, but those were fought long and hard.

At Connersville, Ind., in 1820, Isaac Jones sued Edward Harper for twenty-five cents, the price of some beef Harper had bought from Jones. In the court of the Justice of the Peace several juries disagreed. When, after many trials, a jury agreed, appeal was taken to the Circuit Court, where again there were several 'hung juries.'

At the final trial, all Fayette County turned out en masse. Jones had four lawyers, Harper three; and the argument lasted two days. The jury was out all night and in the morning returned a verdict for Harper because the beef had made his family sick. The costs now amounted to $1100, to pay which Jones sold his farm; and the payment of Harper's lawyers bankrupted that stubborn litigant. *Ib.*, 11.

The people were extraordinarily litigious: 'I have known a lawsuit brought for a piggin or pail, of the value of 25 cents.' Woods: Thwaites, X, 317.

Attending court was a principal means of diversion; and the settlers gathered in throngs at trials which, sometimes, were conducted as much to please the hearers as to try the case. 'If the court please,' began a lawyer at a trial, when he was stopped by the presiding judge who gravely answered, 'Yes, we do please. . . . The people have come in to hear the lawyers plead.' Smith, 7.

In a suit for slander between two doctors, one an Allopathic and the other a 'root doctor,' there were five lawyers on each side and the trial lasted more than a week. *Ib.*, 12–3.

[3] Pitcher's statement to O. C. Terry, in Terry to Jesse W. Weik, July, 1888. Weik

who is said to have been an advocate of unusual brilliancy. In 1828 at a trial of note when Brackenridge was prosecutor of Warrick County, young Lincoln was present, and paid such 'calm intelligent attention' to the proceedings that Brackenridge observed it. When the trial was over Abraham went up to the lawyer, praised his speech to the jury as a 'clear, logical and powerful effort;' but Brackenridge, who won the case,[1] merely 'looked at the shabby boy.' [2]

Thus by reading, listening, absorbing, Abraham's knowledge grew. 'How did Lincoln and yourself learn so much in Indiana under such disadvantages?' Herndon diplomatically asked Dennis Hanks. The answer is the best explanation yet given. 'We learned by sight, scent and hearing. We heard all that was said and talked over and over the questions heard, wore them slick, greasy and threadbare.' [3] This fact must be borne in mind as we follow Lincoln through his remaining years in Indiana.

January 20, 1828, Sarah Grigsby died in child-birth,[4] and Abraham, grieving sorely, blamed Aaron Grigsby and the Grigsby family for his sister's death, which, declares J. W.

MSS. Pitcher says that Thomas Lincoln had built and ran a horse mill for the grinding of corn; but since those who knew the Lincoln family and lived near their cabin make no mention of such a mill and there is no other account of it, the probabilities are that Pitcher's recollection of it is inaccurate. He made the statement to Terry in the summer of 1888, at least sixty years after Abraham Lincoln came to his office in Rockport. At that time Pitcher was old and very deaf.

[1] It was not easy to secure convictions for murder, and when culprits were found guilty the people often petitioned for pardons. Smith, 8–9, 23.

[2] Statement of S. T. Johnson, Sept. 14, 1865. Weik MSS. Johnson was present at this trial and saw and heard what he relates. He says that he often saw Lincoln at the Warrick County Court at Boonville. Johnson is also the authority for the statement that, when Brackenridge saw Lincoln at Washington in 1862, the President 'instantly recognized' the lawyer whom he had not seen for thirty-four years, and assured him that it was at the Boonville trial that Lincoln 'formed a fixed determination to study the law and make that his profession;' and that the President told Brackenridge that his speech at the murder trial 'was the best speech that I, up to that time, ever heard. If I could, as I then thought make as good a speech as that, that my soul would be satisfied.' *Ib.*

Presumably Johnson had this story from Brackenridge, though in what way we are not informed. Brackenridge moved to Texas in 1852 or 1853. See 'John A. Brackenridge': Raleigh, in *Proceedings Southwestern Indiana Historical Socy.*, Oct., 1922, 60. Johnson also says that the trial was of a 'murder case'; but the court records of Warrick County show that no such case was tried in 1828.

[3] Hanks's Charleston statement. Weik MSS.

[4] The baby was stillborn. Chapman's narrative. Weik MSS.

Lamar, 'Abe always thought was due to neglect.' [1] Thus was ignited the antagonism which, it seems, had been slowly though silently accumulated since Sarah's marriage two years before.

In the spring of 1829 [2] two sons of Reuben Grigsby, Reuben, Jr., and Charles, were married. Lincoln was not invited to the wedding, nor yet to the infare which was held at the mansion of the elder Grigsby, a house of two stories built of hewed logs.[3] In hot resentment, he contrived through a confederate a confusion of brides and grooms after the festivities, to be corrected the moment the joke was known to the guests.[4]

With this incident for a text, he wrote a scurrilous description of it, entitling the screed 'The Chronicles of Reuben.' This he dropped at a place on the road 'carelessly, lost it as it were' and it was found by one of the Grigsby family.[5] It was anonymous, of course, but everybody knew who wrote it — nobody in the neighborhood but Lincoln could have written it. It was done in imitation of Old Testament narrative, and described the wedding and infare of the Grigsby boys, ending with a bold picture of the mix-up at the close of the merriment.

'The Chronicles' made a tremendous hit throughout the neighborhood.[6] Gossip on swift wings, carried the story of the marital misadventure all over the countryside. Coarse though the satire was, everybody talked about the salacious description; some committed the whole of it to memory and were able to repeat it as long as they lived.[7] Joseph C. Richardson proudly

[1] Lamar's statement: Hobson, 24. Rhoda M. Coffin records that, even in the best-conditioned families and in the most highly educated communities women frequently were badly injured by ignorant treatment at child-birth and thereafter 'blistered . . . causing indescribable suffering.' Coffin, 61.

[2] April 15 or 16, 1829. [3] Hobson, 26.

[4] Richardson's statement. Weik MSS. [5] *Ib.* [6] Hobson, 28–9.

[7] Herndon, I, 51–4. Herndon got the 'Chronicles of Reuben' in 1865 from the wife of Josiah Crawford. She repeated it from memory to her son, S. A. Crawford, who wrote it out for Herndon. S. A. Crawford to Herndon, Jan. 4, 1866. Weik MSS.

Nathaniel Grigsby wrote Herndon that the copy Herndon secured was 'correctly writen.' Grigsby to Herndon, Oct. 25, 1865. Weik MSS. And see Hobson, 28–9.

'Lincoln did write what is called the book of chronicles, a satire on the Grigsbys.' Grigsby's statement. Weik MSS.

'The thing happened about as Mr. Herndon heard it. My father-in-law told the story to me and my wife often. My wifes father was a brother to the old lady Grigsby, and was at the infair when the thing happened.' John W. Lamar to J. W. Whartmann of Evansville, Jan. 3, 1887. Weik MSS.

relates that 'this poem . . . is remembered here in Indiana in Scraps better than the Bible, better than Watts hymns . . . this [was] the first production that I know of that made us feel that Abe was truly and really *game*. This called the attention of the People to Abe intellectually.' [1]

But the success of his trick and Hudibrastic lines did not satisfy Lincoln — he must further castigate the Grigsbys, although they and their friends were already 'fighting mad.' [2] Lincoln wrote a rhyme about another brother, William Grigsby, who appears to have been bald-headed, very ugly, and, judging from Lincoln's verses, was the butt of rude chaffing. This repellent rhyme was read and repeated as widely as 'The Chronicles of Reuben.' The meaning could be fully understood only by those who knew the incidents described.[3]

A fist fight was the only possible outcome of these attacks and such a fight took place; but Abraham did no fighting, except, perhaps, in the mêlée that followed. The details of the arrangement of this now famous contest are obscure and confused. All that is certainly known is that John D. Johnston, step-brother of Lincoln, had a savage fight with the outraged William Grigsby, and was soundly thrashed. It is said that Lincoln refused to meet Grigsby because the young giant was so much stronger than his offended opponent; and put Johnston forward in his place, an arrangement to which Grigsby agreed.[4] Another ver-

[1] Richardson's statement. Weik MSS.

[2] This incident is made harder to understand by the attempt, long after the Herndon investigations, to lay upon John D. Johnston the blame for the matrimonial contretemps after the infare; and by the assertion that, almost immediately thereafter, Lincoln was on friendly terms with the elder Grigsby. Hobson, 27.

[3] Mrs. Crawford's statement; also Romine's statement. Weik MSS.

Herndon, I, 55, prints two verses, but not as they came to him, and Romine gives others, which are not worth repeating.

[4] Many years after Grigsby, Taylor, Elizabeth Crawford, and others wrote to and were interviewed by Herndon, a new version of the fight was given to Rev. J. Edward Murr by James and Joseph Gentry, Redmond Grigsby, and Wesley Hall, who said that Lincoln and William Grigsby quarrelled over the ownership of a spotted pup. Grigsby dared Lincoln to fight it out, Lincoln refused because he could 'lick' Grigsby and put up his step-brother instead, the winner to get the pup. Grigsby was beating Johnston badly when Lincoln 'bodily hurled him over the heads of the crowd,' daring 'the entire Grigsby crowd to come into him.' But they were afraid, and the incident ended with Lincoln 'laughing and joking.'

According to this tale it was thereafter, and because of this fight, that Lincoln was

sion is that, although there were 'seconds' for each combatant and general agreement that the ring about the fighters should not be broken, Lincoln burst through, dragged Grigsby off Johnston, threw him 'some feet' away, 'waved a bottle of whisky over his head and said he was the big buck of the lick' — whereupon this 'being a general invitation for a general fight they all pitched in and had quite a general fight.' [1] However, it was a notable fight and everybody came. Lincoln was undoubtedly present because it was his quarrel.[2]

As to what happened afterward, however, we have William Grigsby's own account as given directly to his brother Nathaniel Grigsby who, in a letter, repeated it to Herndon: 'my old brother W[illia]m Grigsby tells me some things that past betwin himself and Abraham Lincoln which i wil rite . . . after the fite betwen Wm. Grigsby and John D. Johnson Abraham told Wm. Grigsby that he had whiped Johnson but i can whip you but Wm told him that he did not dispute that but if he Lincoln would give him Grigsby a fair c[h]ance he would fite him he Lincoln wish to now how he wish to fite, Grigsby told Lincoln he would fite him a duel Lincoln told Grigsby that he Lincoln was not a going to fool his life away with one shot, so the mater stoped.' [3]

In the autumn of 1829 Thomas Lincoln resolved to leave Indiana for Illinois. After staying with the Lincolns in Indiana for four years, John Hanks had gone back to Kentucky and thence in 1828 to Macon County, Illinois.[4] He sent back to Thomas Lincoln and Dennis Hanks the usual reports of a new country.[5] Also the 'milk sickness' had come again or was ex-

not invited to the Grigsby wedding and infare which caused him to devise the prank described in the text and to write the 'Chronicles of Reuben.' By this later account, Lincoln is made to apologize to the Grigsbys, stating that he meant only to have some fun, and to deliver to them the manuscript of the 'Chronicles.' Murr, *Indiana Magazine of History*, XIV, 38–41.

[1] Taylor's and John Hoskins' statements. Weik MSS. Taylor was the son of James Taylor, who hired Lincoln to run the ferryboat across the Ohio and who acted as the 'second' to John D. Johnston in his fight with Grigsby. *Ib.*

[2] Grigsby's statement. Weik MSS.

[3] Grigsby to Herndon, Oct. 25, 1865. Weik MSS.

[4] John Hanks to Herndon, June 13, 1865. Weik MSS.

[5] *Decatur* (Ill.) *Republican*, July 13, 1890.

pected.[1] So Thomas and Sarah Lincoln sold the Johnston lot in Elizabethtown, Kentucky, for one hundred and twenty-three dollars to Thomas J. Wathen,[2] going to Elizabethtown to execute the deed and get the money. After their return to Indiana they spent the winter of 1829–30 in making ready for the journey. Two years earlier Thomas Lincoln had succeeded in getting a patent for half of the one hundred and sixty acres which he originally had entered.[3] This eighty acres he now sold to James Gentry.[4] During the winter of 1829–30 Lincoln also sold what live-stock he had, and bought two yoke of oxen and a stout wagon for his journey westward.

Nor did the pious Thomas neglect to equip himself with a certification of church membership and regularity, although, seem-

[1] Hanks to Herndon, March 7, 1866. Weik MSS. Dennis gives different reasons for leaving Indiana: 'Thomas Lincoln hearing of the rich Prairies of Illinois already cleared up and prepared for the plow decided to go.' Hanks's first Chicago statement. Weik MSS. On the other hand, says Hanks: 'The Reson is this we war perplext By a Disese cald Milk Sick my Self Being the oldest I was Determed to Leve and hunt a Cuntry whare the milk was not I maried his oldest Step Daughter I Sold out and they concluded to gow with me . . . My wifs mother could not think of parting with hir and we Riped up Stakes and Started to Illinois.' Hanks to Herndon, March 7, 1866. Weik MSS.

[2] Records Hardin County, Deed Book C, 219.

[3] The patent, signed by J. Q. Adams, then President, for eighty acres, is dated June 6, 1827. Records Land Office, Interior Department. The patent was secured by releases and application of payments, a method often adopted by poor settlers. The Act of July 21, 1821, extending time for payments granted a discount of thirty-seven and one-half per cent when full payment was promptly made; but Lincoln could not get the money. December 22, 1818, one Charles Whiting had entered eighty acres in Posey County, Ind., paying the first installment of $80; and he assigned his interest to the heirs of one Memorial Forrest, whose guardian, James McCrery, got an order of court, April 2, 1827, to sell this interest. Three days later, at Vincennes, McCrery assigned it to Thomas Lincoln who, April 30, 1827, relinquished it to the government, and was allowed credit for the $80 that Whiting had paid on it.

At the same time Lincoln sold by relinquishment, the east half of the 160 acres he had entered in 1817, to James Gentry, who promptly paid the government cash for the remainder of the purchase price. How much Gentry paid Lincoln is unknown. The money which he had paid on this half ten years before was promptly credited to the balance due on the remaining eighty acres. Thus, full payment for half of his original entry having been made, Lincoln received his patent. Gen. Land Office Records, Interior Department. A brochure on this transaction has been prepared by George R. Wickham, Assistant Commissioner of the General Land Office, upon which, as well as upon the official records, I have relied.

This is the most extensive and complicated transaction in which Thomas Lincoln ever was engaged, and it suggests the resourceful business mind of James Gentry.

[4] The records of Spencer County having been destroyed in 1831, the amount paid Lincoln for the unproductive little farm is unknown, but probably was somewhat more than the $80 Lincoln paid the government for it.

ingly, as sour fruitage of Abe's feud with the Grigsbys, there was difficulty in obtaining it. On December 12, 1829, Little Pigeon Creek Church granted a 'letter of dismission' to Lincoln and his wife, which was recalled on the objection of Mrs. Nancy Grigsby that they were unworthy of such credential. The row must have been settled between the parties for, a month later, January 10, 1830, Thomas was appointed on a committee to settle a quarrel between two sisters of the congregation. Since this, the only distinction ever accorded him, was just before he left Indiana forever, it would seem to have been a sort of churchly emollient and farewell. However, Lincoln had been a generous contributor, having once given twenty-four pounds of meal to church support.[1]

During the last two years spent in Indiana a change of far-reaching results began to come over Abraham Lincoln. Although most people in Carter township were National Republicans and supporters of Henry Clay,[2] Thomas Lincoln and his family were Democrats and followers of Andrew Jackson [3] as, indeed, were most poor people.[4] Abraham, too, was a Jackson man — a 'Jackson Democrat,' as Dennis Hanks asserts with emphasis.[5] Political campaigns had invaded Spencer and Warrick Counties, and, by 1828, had become heated.[6] For some years political handbills had been scattered through the settlements and, recently, stump speakers had enlivened backwoods gatherings.

[1] Records Little Pigeon Creek Baptist Church, MS. March 10, 1828.

[2] The earliest records are for the Presidential election of 1832 when thirteen votes were cast for Jackson in Carter township and eighteen for Clay; in 1836, fourteen votes were cast for Van Buren, Democrat, and twenty for Harrison, Whig; in 1840, thirty-five for Harrison and six for Van Buren. The township continued strongly Whig and Republican until 1876 when Tilden carried it by three votes. In 1856 the American (anti-foreign) party cast fifty-four votes to twenty-five for the Republicans and sixty-five for the Democrats. In 1860 the vote was one hundred twenty-four for Lincoln, seventy-six for Douglas, eighteen for Bell and Everett and one for Breckinridge. *Hist. W., S. & P. Cos.*, Ind., 299–305.

[3] Hanks's Charleston statement. Weik MSS.

[4] Yet Nathaniel Grigsby says that 'we were all Jackson boys and men at that time in Indiana;' and the Grigsbys were comparatively rich. Grigsby's statement. Weik MSS.

[5] Such men were violently intolerant, voting for or against local candidates solely because those candidates supported or opposed Jackson. Smith, 81.

[6] As illustrative of the habits of the time, it is of interest to note that, even in com-

Lincoln's friend, William Jones, the store-keeper in Gentryville, who was a staunch Republican, took the *Louisville Journal* and, perhaps, one or two other newspapers.[1] William Wood, too, was a Republican, and, as we have seen, he also took newspapers published at Cincinnati.[2] In these newspapers the speeches of Clay and other public men were printed, and able editorial comment made upon them as well as upon all the questions of the day. Much was reproduced from the Eastern press also, particularly that of New England and Philadelphia. The *Louisville Journal* was violently opposed to Jackson and fervently supported Clay.

Lincoln read these papers [3] to as much purpose as he read books. 'Abe read the newspapers . . . at least such as I took,' Wood told Herndon; frequently borrowed the *Telescope*, which Wood took from 1825 to 1830.[4] From 1824 to 1830, says Mrs. Lincoln, 'newspapers were [to be] had' and 'Abe was a constant reader of them. I am sure of this for the years of 1827–28–29–30.' [5] To everybody he met and wherever he went, he told all he read; he became 'a kind of newsboy' of the vicinity, says Hanks.[6]

In the Presidential campaign of 1828 the National Republican candidate was John Quincy Adams, then President; the Democratic candidate was Andrew Jackson. The outstanding issues were Jackson's wrongs in 1824, when the House of Representatives elected Adams, internal improvements, a protective tariff — 'the American system,' as Henry Clay called it — and the Bank of the United States as fiscal agent of the government and the supervisor of a stable currency. Discussion of these ques-

munities priding themselves on superior morality, candidates who were successful at elections had to treat everybody to whisky. *Recollections:* Harris, 63–4.

[1] William Jones was born at Vincennes, Ind., Jan. 5, 1800, and lived there until, in his twenty-seventh year, he went to Gentryville. He had much influence on Lincoln's early life. He enlisted as a Union soldier at the outbreak of the Civil War, rose to be Colonel of his regiment, the 53rd Indiana Volunteer Infantry, and was killed in action at Atlanta, Georgia, July 22, 1864. Hobson, 34. The *Louisville Journal*, founded in 1831 by George D. Prentice, was the leading paper in the West.

[2] Wood's statement. Weik MSS. [3] Hobson, 34.

[4] Wood's statement. Weik MSS. *The Telescope* was a religious weekly, published in New York City from 1824 to 1830, and perhaps later, and edited by W. Beach.

[5] Mrs. Lincoln's statement. Weik MSS.

[6] Hanks in Charleston statement. Weik MSS.

tions on the stump and in the newspapers was forthright and within the range of popular understanding and credibility.[1] Ratliff Boone was a candidate for Representative in Congress from that district and made speeches which Lincoln undoubtedly heard; but since Boone was an ardent Democrat and aggressive supporter of Jackson, it would appear that he did not greatly influence Lincoln.[2]

We 'went to political and other speeches and gatherings. . . . We would hear all sides and opinions talk them over, discuss them agreeing or disagreeing,' relates Dennis Hanks, and continues in disgust: 'Abe turned Whig in 1827–8 [3] — think Col. Jones made him a Whig dont know it . . . I opposed Abe in Politics when . . . he became Whig.' [4] Worst of all, laments Dennis, he 'allways Loved Hen Clay's Speaches I think was the Cause Mostly' of Lincoln's drifting away from Jacksonian Democracy.[5]

Certainly the Republican position in 1828–30 was supported by what Lincoln had experienced throughout his life — the necessity for means of communication, the worthlessness of the local currency, so uncertain in value that he never knew the purchasing power of his trifling wages.[6] Internal improvements

[1] Judge O. H. Smith says that 'stump speaking' began in Indiana about 1826. As an example of popular ignorance, and intolerance of what was considered extravagant statements by speakers, he relates that Judge John Test, a Representative in Congress from the eastern district of Indiana, told an audience that the speed of railway trains in England was thirty miles an hour. The crowd jeered and roared with laughter; and one cried out 'you are crazy, or do you think we are fools; a man could not live a moment [when going] at that speed.' For his assertion, Judge Test was defeated for re-election. Smith, 80.

[2] Boone was, perhaps, the most active politician in Southwestern Indiana. He was twice Lieutenant Governor and was six times elected to Congress. A life of this pioneer politician and legislator is now being written by Hon. John E. Iglehart of Evansville, Ind.

[3] Hanks's Charleston statement. Weik MSS. Whig is used for National Republican. But David Turnham says he was still a Democrat when he left Indiana. Turnham to Herndon, Sept. 29, 1866. Weik MSS.

Dennis Hanks, who declares twice in his Charleston statement that Lincoln turned 'Whig' in 1828–9, says in a letter to Herndon that he did not 'Turn Whig' until 'After He cum to Illinois aBout 1830.' Hanks to Herndon, March 12, 1866. Weik MSS.

[4] *Ib.*; Hanks's Charleston statement. Weik MSS.

[5] *Ib.*; Hanks to Herndon, March 12, 1866. Weik MSS.

[6] See Cockrum, 403–4. The only specie was cut coin. *Ib.* At Vincennes in 1818 Faux 'passed away my twenty dollar note of the rotten bank of Harmony, Pennsylvania, for five dollars only.' Faux: Thwaites, XI, 207, Oct. 30. Even in Cincinnati

and stable money meant something tangible to Abraham Lincoln. Then too the men he knew best and most respected, William Jones, David Turnham, William Wood, were National Republicans and ardent champions of Henry Clay, the brilliant leader of that party.

Whatever the cause, it appears to be reasonably certain that it was at this period that Lincoln cut loose from the political faith of his fathers.[1] He said little about it, however, at the time, as was the case twenty-four years later when he left the Whig party. With that strange mingling of caution, secretiveness and craft which so confounded his opponents and puzzled his supporters in after years, Lincoln, in 1828–30, kept to himself his changed or changing conviction and his purposes. Indeed, Elizabeth Crawford recalls that in the Adams–Jackson campaign of 1828 she heard Abraham singing a Democratic campaign jingle.[2]

But though he may still have hurrahed for Old Hickory, the forces had been set in motion within his mind which revolutionized his political ideas and shaped his political career. When Abraham Lincoln left Indiana in 1830, he was a Whig at heart and ready to enlist, as he quickly did, under the banner of gallant, dashing 'Harry of the West.'

notes of the local banks were from thirty to forty per cent below those of the United States Bank; and outside the city they were practically worthless. *Ib.*, 171. Between Louisville and Vincennes in 1820 the difference in the value of bank notes was twenty-five per cent. Welby: Thwaites, XII, 270.

[1] It is worthy of note that all the Lincolns continued to be Democrats, none of them voting for Lincoln in 1860 or even enlisting in the Union Army. This, too, is true of the Hanks family, excepting only John Hanks, who became a Republican in 1860 and was later a Union soldier.

[2] Mrs. Crawford to Herndon, Feb. 21, 1866. Weik MSS.

CHAPTER III

NEW SALEM: EARLY MANHOOD AND DEVELOPMENT

One of the people! born to be
Their curious epitome. STODDARD.

I desire to live, and I desire place and distinction as a politician. LINCOLN.

IN the little semi-circular chamber where met the Senate of the United States,[1] every seat was filled and the small gallery was crowded. At his place stood a man little above medium height but broad-shouldered and compactly built, with remarkably large, dark eyes and cliff-like brow. He was dressed with careful regard to fashion, claw-hammer coat of blue broadcloth, the breast adorned by large polished brass buttons, a figured waistcoat and buff trousers. A high stock was around his neck and frills of a fine linen shirt protruded from his bosom. He was closing one of the greatest of speeches.

About him sat a company of men, historic in their eminence. One of these Senators, a young man of thirty-eight, with wide, intelligent gray eyes almost spiritual in appearance, and a face of striking manly beauty, leaned slightly forward in his chair. The composure of even Robert Y. Hayne of South Carolina was disturbed.

'Sir,' said Daniel Webster, his voice deep and compelling as the tones of a golden bell, 'Sir, I have not allowed myself to look beyond the Union, to see what might lie hidden in the dark recess behind. . . . While the Union lasts, we have high . . . prospects spread out before us, for us and our children. Beyond that I seek not to penetrate the veil. God grant that in my day, at least, that curtain may not rise! . . . When my eyes shall be turned to behold for the last time the sun in heaven, may I not see him shining on the broken and dishonored fragments of a once glorious Union; on States dissevered, discordant, belligerent; on a land rent with civil feuds, or drenched, it may be, in fraternal blood! Let their last feeble and lingering glance rather behold the gorgeous ensign of the republic, now known and

[1] The room where the Supreme Court now sits.

honored throughout the earth, still full high advanced, its arms and trophies streaming in their original lustre, not a stripe erased or polluted, nor a single star obscured, bearing for its motto, no such miserable interrogatory as "What is all this worth?" nor those other words of delusion and folly, "Liberty first and Union afterwards;" but everywhere, spread all over in characters of living light, blazing on all its ample folds, as they float over the sea and over the land, and in every wind under the whole heavens, that other sentiment, dear to every true American heart — Liberty *and* Union, now and for ever, one and inseparable!' [1]

With the echo of these words in the ears of the hearers, the Senate adjourned late in the afternoon of January 27, 1830. Since the convening of Congress in December the debate on the Foot Resolution [2] had been under way and for nearly three months more it was to continue. It had ranged throughout well-nigh every phase of the subject of free government; but, from the first, the supreme issue had thrust itself to the front and held the lead throughout the controversy — the issue of the right of a State to nullify national law as against the right of the Nation to suppress such opposition by force if necessary. Since the adoption of the Constitution this basic question had troubled all thoughtful Americans.

Only fifteen years before New England had been on fire with the spirit of separation and, in the midst of war, had contemplated withdrawing from the Union.[3] And now angered by the tariff of 1828, South Carolina had brought the question to a head. But not the gifted Hayne, not the mighty Webster was to lead the forces that finally battled for the antagonistic theories of government so powerfully set forth by these two men and their associates in that historic discussion.

[1] *Writings and Speeches of Daniel Webster* (National edition), VI, 75. *Register of Debates*, 21st Cong. 1st Sess., Part I, VI, 58–80. Webster began his speech Jan. 26 and concluded it the next day. He revised it later, and there are changes in style and phraseology between the speech as it appears in Webster's *Works* and in the *Register of Debates*.

[2] This resolution, offered by Senator Samuel Augustus Foot of Connecticut, provided for an enquiry 'into the expediency of limiting . . . the sales of the public lands.' *Ib.*, 21st Cong. 1st Sess., 11.

[3] For a condensed account, see *Life of John Marshall:* Albert J. Beveridge, IV, 15, 27, 51–3.

At the time of this fateful parliamentary contest and about three weeks after the delivery of Webster's speech, a big, clumsy wagon drawn by two yoke of oxen moved out of the backwoods hamlet of Gentryville, Indiana. In the wagon three women and four children found room among the entire household effects of three families. In front or behind were five men, one riding a horse and another, a young giant of a man, six feet four inches in height, angular and awkward as he was tall, drove with gentle goad the slow and sleepy oxen.[1] A dog walked by his side.

Thus, in the middle of February, 1830, strode Abraham Lincoln toward his destiny. The Lincoln-Hanks-Hall clan were moving to Illinois. Of all in that company of migrants, he alone knew of the debate then raging in the Senate, and he alone heard of Webster's exposition of that philosophy which was to become his own political religion. Abraham had read Webster's speech published in the *Louisville Journal* at least two weeks before the Lincoln exodus from Indiana. But he had said nothing about it to any one of that dull, ignorant, indifferent company. Why should he? None of them could have understood, none cared to understand.

Perhaps Lincoln himself hardly realized the meaning of that conflict of reason and eloquence, coming from afar like sullen thunder sounding beyond the horizon. Yet he had heard it, that distant booming; and again, and soon, the unmistakable sound was to come to his ears, and thereafter again and yet again.

Thomas Lincoln, as we have seen, had sold everything he owned in Indiana; so had Dennis Hanks and so had 'Squire' Hall. The four oxen, the wagon, the goods in it and a horse,[2] represented all the property accumulated during their years in Indiana by the Lincolns, father and son, by Hanks, Hall and John D. Johnston, by Sarah Lincoln and her two daughters now

[1] Chapman's Narrative. Weik MSS.

[2] 'This is positively the first waggon he [Thomas Lincoln] ever owned.' *Ib.*
'He brought to Ill[inoi]s with him some stock cattle [the oxen], one Horse, 3 Beds and Beddings, 1 Bureau, 1 Table, 1 Clothes chest, 1 set of chairs, cooking utensils, clothings and so forth.' *Ib.*

married.[1] Among them they had little cash [2] save the 'shinplasters,' notes of local Indiana banks, of such uncertain value as to be of small worth.

Northward, over the hills and through the forests of Indiana, they made their way to Vincennes, where they stopped for a while to see the wonders of that town, still the largest in the State. Crossing the Wabash above Vincennes, the crowded wagon with its motley escort crept over the 'black dismal prairie,' [3] still bleak and chill from departing winter. The grass which in summer time grew taller than a man, lay withered on the flat surface. No smoke from settler's cabin in the open cheered the landscape; and few if any such habitations greeted the travellers, even when they passed groves or clumps of trees.[4] At night they camped, wherever they chanced to be.

The frozen ground yielded a little to the sun and this thawing earth in which the wagon wheels sank caused the lumbering oxen to go more slowly even than their leisurely wont. There were no bridges and ice forming at night was a source of danger and delay; when fording streams the oxen 'would break through a square yard of thin ice at every step.' Once Lincoln's dog was left behind on the banks of a stream. Against protests from the other men who wanted to leave the distressed animal, Abraham

[1] Elizabeth to Dennis Hanks, June 9, 1821, and Matilda to 'Squire' Levi Hall, Sept. 13, 1826, son of Levi Hall and Nancy Hanks the aunt of Nancy Lincoln.

Dennis thus enumerates those who went to Illinois: 'There was 13 in the three familys Thos Lincoln wife Abe J. D. Johnston Squir Hall wife sun Dennis F. Hanks wife 3 Daughters one Sun John Hanks Sarah J Hanks Nancy M Hanks Hariet A. Hanks John Talbott Hanks.' Hanks to Herndon, April —, 1866. Weik MSS. The eldest of these children could not have been more than eight years old.

Dennis includes John Hanks, thus making the number fourteen, which would indicate that John had probably joined the party on the road and accompanied the movers back to the place he had chosen for them in Illinois.

[2] Hanks says that he had some money. Hanks to Herndon, March 7, 1866. Such money as Thomas Lincoln had came from the sale to Gentry of Lincoln's eighty-acre farm and the sale of his hogs, etc.

[3] Tillson, 69.

[4] From Canton, through Peoria and Ottawa to Chicago, a traveller in 1827 did not see a single white person except in those small towns (*Early Pioneers, etc. of Illinois:* Harvey Lee Ross, 36); and from Blooming Grove [Bloomington] to Lake Michigan there were no houses at all; *Good Old Times in McLean Co., Ills.*: E. Duis, 1–2. Northeast and west of Galena the whole country was an uninhabited wilderness. *History of Illinois:* Thomas Ford, 102–3.

Travelling from Terre Haute to Sangamon River in 1823 a Methodist preacher went six days without seeing a human being or human habitation. Coffin, 92.

took off his shoes, waded the icy water, and carried the shivering pet across, the dog giving 'frantic leaps of joy' when on solid earth again.[1]

For more than two weeks the band continued their journey; and, finally, early in March reached the place which John Hanks had selected for them in Macon County on a bluff overlooking the Sangamon River, about eight miles southwest of Decatur. The spot was well wooded and the five men soon built a cabin in which, it would appear, the Lincoln, Hanks and Hall families, spent the spring, summer, and fall of 1830 and the bitter winter that followed. Fifteen acres were broken and Abraham helped cut trees and split rails to fence it.[2] This task finished, he did odd jobs for other settlers.

Then for months he is hid from our view, as if behind the thick white smother that, in the winter of 1830–31, concealed all Illinois from the sight of man. On Christmas day the snow began to fall over the whole State and kept falling steadily for most of the winter. Men not far from home when the storm began, making fast for shelter, were blinded and lost. For weeks nobody ventured from cabin refuge except for firewood near at hand.[3] Even in the woods the snow lay a foot deep on the earth, then two feet, three feet, four feet; on the prairie drifts mounted to fifteen feet, and where the snow was level 'the tops of corn shocks could just be seen.'[4] The cold was intense, often ten to twenty degrees below zero.[5] Cattle died; deer and turkey which had been numerous were nearly exterminated.[6] Of wild animals, only the wolves survived, and even they suffered for food. A slight rain fell and a thick crust formed six feet above the roads.[7] All winter the settlers confined in the snow-bound cabins had nothing to eat but boiled corn and pounded meal.[8] How the Lincolns fared in the crowded log hut during this desperate sea-

[1] Lincoln's account to Herndon. Herndon, I, 68 *n.*

[2] The exact location was on the N.E. quarter of the S.W. quarter of Sec. 28, Township 16, N., Range 1, E., in what is now Harristown Township. It lies about two and a half miles south and seven and a half miles west of Decatur, Macon County. Information from J. C. Thompson and Mrs. Inez J. Bender.

[3] Duis, 9–10, 178–9.

[4] *Pioneers of Menard and Mason Co.*: T. G. Onstot, 134; Duis, 10.

[5] Ross, 51 [6] Duis, 9. [7] Onstot, 21–35. [8] Duis, 192.

son can only be imagined. No chronicle of them at that time exists.

With the coming of spring the whole land was covered with water.[1] Creeks and rivers overflowed and, for a time, rude boats were the only means of getting about. The fame of John Hanks as a skilled Mississippi flatboatman who had made several trips to New Orleans [2] had spread throughout the region round about, and had come to the ears of one Denton Offut, a brisk, imaginative little man, full of mercantile projects. Offut had also heard, it seems, of Lincoln's southern journey on the Mississippi. At any rate that active promoter communicated in some fashion with these river navigators and hired them for sixteen and twenty dollars a month,[3] to take a flatboat laden with provisions to New Orleans from the landing-place of a straggling village containing five hundred and seventy people [4] called Springfield, four miles from Sangamon River.

So, taking John D. Johnston with them, John Hanks and Lincoln went in a canoe,[5] down the river from Decatur, to the place from which the expedition was to start. Upon their arrival no boat awaited them. Having failed to get one Offut set them to work on making a craft. On government land some distance above the mouth of Spring Creek the three men cut and hewed timber and floated it down to Sangamo Town, seven miles northwest of Springfield. At a nearby mill planks were sawn and finally the boat, eighty feet long and eighteen feet wide, was constructed.[6]

The work took six weeks, during which time the men camped in a shanty, hastily thrown together on the river bank. Abraham did the cooking; [7] but sometimes, 'when he felt like it,' he

[1] Duis, 10. [2] *Ib.*

[3] Hanks had made a number of voyages to New Orleans. *Decatur* (Ill.) *Republican*, July 13, 1890; and John Hanks to Herndon, June 13, 1865. Weik MSS.

[4] *Settlement of Illinois:* William Vipond Pooley, 325. Seven years earlier a Methodist preacher described Springfield as 'a little cluster of cabins . . . all "squatters" on government land.' Coffin, 94.

[5] John Hanks to Herndon, June 13, 1865. Weik MSS. Canoes in Illinois at that time were made by hollowing out and shaping logs from cottonwood trees. They were much used to carry grain, supplies, and even hogs, as well as for travel. Harvey Lee Ross, 2.

[6] John Hanks to Herndon, June 13, 1865; John Hanks's statement. Weik MSS.

[7] *Ib.*

went to the cabin of Caleb Carman who lived not far away, for his own noonday meal. At first Carman thought Lincoln 'a Green horn tho after half hours Conversation with him I found Him no Green Horn.' For the first time since learning to read Lincoln was without a book, and at night he joined the others at cards, the game being seven-up, which he played uncommonly well. Clad in light blue jeans coat, very short, and trousers also short, and wearing a broad brimmed hat and low shoes, he attracted attention by his stature and sparkling humor.[1]

At work or play, he talked, told stories, perpetrated jokes; quoted poetry and declaimed fragments of orations learned from books in Indiana or from newspapers, all to the astonishment of bystanders and the delight and pride of Hanks and Johnston. Abraham discussed politics, too, with Caleb Carman and others, showing remarkable familiarity with that confused but engaging subject.[2] Finally Offut's vessel was finished and, on May 1, loaded with bacon, corn, and hogs, the southward journey began, with the owner in charge and Hanks, Lincoln and Johnston doing all the work.[3] Some miles on their way, the boat stranded on a mill-dam at the foot of the river bluff on which stood a few log cabins. The place was called New Salem.

Everybody in the hamlet came down to the river to see the trouble. Another boat was borrowed and part of the cargo transferred. Lincoln bored a hole in the end of Offut's craft through which the water in the boat ran out when the lower end was lifted [4] — an inventive feat which heightened Offut's growing admiration of his talents. At last the dam was passed, the provisions reloaded and the voyage continued. Throughout the incident Abraham was conspicuous because of his great height, his long legs wading about in the river accentuating his stature.

Only one thing of note happened on the journey to New Orleans. Five miles below New Salem lived 'Squire' Russell B. Godbey, from whom Offut bought several hogs which were very wild and refused to be driven onto the flatboat.[5] Somebody hit

[1] Carman's statement; Caleb Carman to Herndon, Nov. 30, 1866. Weik MSS.

[2] *Ib.* [3] John Hanks to Herndon, June 13, 1865. Weik MSS. [4] *Ib.*

[5] *Lincoln and New Salem*, 19. This is a carefully prepared pamphlet compiled and published by the Old Salem Lincoln League of Petersburg, Ill.

Coleman Smoot says that the hogs were bought from Henry Onstot, who owned a distillery. Smoot to Herndon, May 7, 1866. Weik MSS.

upon the expedient of sewing up the eyes of the swine and thus getting them on board. The eyelids of the pigs were stitched, but it is not certain whether the device produced the desired result. In the various accounts of witnesses to this incident, given more than thirty-five years afterward, there is irreconcilable confusion as to the part Lincoln took. One says that Lincoln suggested sewing up the eyes of the hogs; [1] another that he refused to wield the needle but held the pigs while the sewing was done; [2] still another that a farm hand near by offered to sew the eyelids if Lincoln would plough for him during the operation.[3] His love of animals, however, makes it improbable that Abraham took part in the brutality.

His second river trip to New Orleans, made when he was twenty-one years of age, was like the first, except that there was no attack by negroes. Thirty years later, at a political convention, John Hanks recalled that Lincoln and his companions went to the slave market and saw a handsome mulatto girl sold at auction; whereupon, said Hanks, 'the iron entered his soul' and he swore that, if ever he got a chance, he would hit slavery and 'hit it hard.' Hanks, however, does not make mention of this circumstance in his signed statement,[4] nor, except to Herndon, did Lincoln himself ever speak of it publicly or privately. Two decades were to pass before Lincoln showed much if any concern about slavery. Never the apostle of a cause, he was to become the perfect interpreter of public thought and feeling and so the instrument of events.

Offut's business transacted, the party came up the Mississippi on a steamboat, as Lincoln and Allen Gentry had done

[1] In *Lincoln and New Salem*, 19, it is stated that 'local tradition has it,' that Lincoln suggested the sewing of the hogs' eyes. R. D. Miller in his *History of Menard Co.*, 204, says the same thing.

[2] John Hanks to Herndon, June 13, 1865. 'Abe said I can't sew the eyes up. He held the heads of [the] hogs whilst Offutt did sew up their eyes.'

[3] Smoot to Herndon, May 7, 1866. Weik MSS. The simpler method of tying the legs of the hogs seems to have been overlooked, not to speak of the hogs already on the boat.

[4] John Hanks could not write and signed by making his mark.

In his Autobiography (1860) Lincoln says: 'Hanks had not gone to New Orleans, but having a family, and being likely to be detained from home longer than at first expected, had turned back from St. Louis.' *Works*, VI, 30.

three years before.[1] Lincoln had planned to stay in the south and cut wood, but Hanks and Johnston fell ill and he returned with them.[2] From St. Louis, where Johnston remained for a time, Lincoln and Hanks walked to Edwardsville, whence Lincoln went to visit his father in Coles County.[3] Offut, captivated by his tall, sensible, fun-making boatman, had engaged Lincoln to help him keep a store which he planned to open at New Salem as soon as he could buy and transport a stock of groceries and dry goods.

For New Salem, then, Lincoln started in late July, 1831,[4] after saying good-bye to his father and step-mother whom he was not again to see for many a long year. Across the prairies he made his way, his head and shoulders showing above the tall grass which hid from view horses, cattle and men of average height.[5] Only in the woods along watercourses had settlers built cabins and the interminable open stretches were still practically unbroken.[6] He was now twenty-two years of age, and free to do as he liked.

When he reached New Salem, a hamlet of fifteen log cabins,[7] an election was about to be held.[8] Offut had not appeared, there

[1] John Hanks to Herndon, June 13, 1865. Weik MSS.

[2] J. R. Herndon to Herndon, May 28, 1865. Weik MSS.

[3] Thomas and Sarah Lincoln moved three times in less than two years: first from Macon County to Buck Grove in Coles County in 1831, where they remained one year; next to Muddy Point in the same county, staying at that place but a few months; and finally to Goose Nest Prairie, also in Coles, where they continued to live. Chapman's Narrative. Weik MSS.

William G. Greene who in 1840, nine years later, stopped at the Lincoln cabin on Goose Nest Prairie, says that it was 'the most wretched hovel he had encountered in his journey. It was without a stable, outhouse of any kind, and not a shrub or tree was in sight.' Whitney, I, 74–5.

[4] *Lincoln and New Salem*, 19.

[5] In the lowlands the grass was six to eight feet high. Duis, 1.

The prairie was most impressive; even the ocean did not excel it 'in beauty and grandeur.' Travellers rose from their seats in wagons to see it. Brunson, II, 31.

[6] There were only 157,447 people in the entire State when Lincoln made this trip. Ford, 102.

In 1836, settlements were so scattered that the boundaries of the Methodist Conference were five hundred miles in length and seventy miles in breadth. Brunson, 31.

[7] R. B. Rutledge to Herndon, no date, but 1866. Weik MSS.

[8] The election was for Governor and members of Congress. The candidates for the

was nothing for Lincoln to do and he went to a cabin where some men were gathered. There the voting was to be done. One of the election clerks, a young merchant, John McNamar, was ill; and the other, Mentor Graham, school teacher for the neighborhood, learning on inquiry that Lincoln could write, asked him to take McNamar's place. Lincoln did so,[1] and thus from the very beginning, took part in the politics of New Salem and Sangamon County.

As the tiresome hours wore on, broken only by voters announcing their preferences, which the clerks recorded, Lincoln brightened the time by telling stories, and thus from the outset, pleased and entertained those among whom he had come to live. Until Offut came, he did nothing but get acquainted,[2] boarding with the family of John M. Cameron,[3] who, with James Rutledge,[4] had built the mill and dam which had stopped Offut's flatboat three months earlier.[5] They were the founders of New Salem, too, important men in the little settlement.[6] Both belonged to the Cumberland Presbyterian Church and Cameron sometimes varied his milling and farming by preaching.[7] While still awaiting Offut, Lincoln earned a small sum from Dr. Nelson, by piloting from New Salem to Beardstown a raft upon which were the Doctor, his family, and belongings.[8]

Finally Offut arrived with his merchandise and opened his store in a small log house on a lot costing ten dollars, situated at the edge of the bluff just above the mill.[9] Lincoln proved himself a good clerk and swiftly grew in his employer's already inflated regard. Garrulous, boastful, restless, a 'wild, harum-scarum kind of a man,' as New Salem folk termed him,[10] Offut

governorship were John Reynolds and William Kinney, both Democrats and strong Jackson men. Ford, 103.

[1] *Lincoln and New Salem*, 19, 20. [2] *Ib.*, 19.

[3] R. B. Rutledge to Herndon, no date, but 1866. Weik MSS.

[4] Rutledge was born in South Carolina, May 11, 1781. *Ib.* Also 'Memoirs of the Rutledge family of New Salem:' J. E. Hamand, MS., 5.

[5] Statement of Mentor Graham, no date, but in 1866. Weik MSS.

[6] R. B. Rutledge to Herndon, no date, but 1866. Weik MSS.

[7] John McNamar to Herndon, June 4, 1866. Weik MSS.; Hamand, 2.

[8] *Lincoln and New Salem*, 21.

[9] Rutledge to Herndon, no date, but 1866. Weik MSS.

[10] James Short to Herndon, July 7, 1865. Weik MSS.

was forever bragging about the superiority of his assistant, physical as well as mental. But fate spoke by the wagging tongue of the strutting little merchant. A provoking challenge from him, brought about an incident which gave Lincoln a very human force that helped decisively to lift him into his political career.

Less than three miles [1] from New Salem was a grove, named after John Clary,[2] the first settler to build a cabin among its trees. Clary's sons and those of other farmers in the settlement, some twenty-five or more in number, were the best fighters in all that part of Sangamon County; indeed there was no 'harder set' in the entire State and they took part in all the 'rowdyism or revelry in a circuit of twenty miles.' No band of young roughs could cope with the 'Clary Grove Boys,' as the youthful warriors from the Clary settlement were called. Between them and 'the River timber boys' a feud existed [3] which seemingly was ended by the prowess of the Clary battlers. Led by a stalwart, pugnacious youth, Jack Armstrong, they could drink more whisky, swear more lustily, wrestle better, and fight harder than those from Sand Ridge, Indian Point, Concord, or any other group that gathered at New Salem, where everybody came on Saturdays to trade, gossip, wrestle, raffle, pitch horseshoes, run races, get drunk, maul one another with their fists, and indulge, generally, in frontier happiness,[4] as a relief from the week's monotonous drudgery on the raw and difficult farms.

With all their physical exuberance and prankish deviltry the Clary Grove Boys had fine elements of character. They were generous, sympathetic, frank, truthful, honest. Physical courage and strength were their ideals of masculine perfection; but they were as loyal to a friend as they were implacable to an enemy, and for the helpless and weak they were considerate and protective. They were hero worshippers, as untamed human

[1] Royal A. Clary's statement. Weik MSS.

[2] *Lincoln and New Salem*, 13. [3] Miller, 208.

[4] Onstot, 53, 72, 132. An example of these curious and senseless fights is given by Onstot, whose book is largely his personal recollections. One Saturday, when the young men had mounted their horses to leave the village for their homes, one of them said to another, 'I can tear your hide,' whereupon all dismounted and the two fought heartily. There were no rules, kicking, biting, gouging being practised as well as striking with the fist. *Ib.*, 71–2.

beings usually are — the type of men that conquerors have used to fashion invincible armies and politicians to shape formidable followings.[1]

On a Saturday gala day, loudly proclaiming the manly prowess of his clerk, Offut offered to bet as much as five dollars [2] that Lincoln could throw anybody who would wrestle with him. John Clary's brother, William, who, for the moment, was running another 'store' in New Salem,[3] took the bet and produced as his champion Jack Armstrong. Jack had thrown or whipped every man who had wrestled or fought with him and was considered 'the best fighter' in all the countryside.[4] The contest was a notable affair, everybody attended, and bets of jack-knives, whisky, and even money were as numerous as the onlookers.[5]

Three or four accounts of the wrestling match between him and Lincoln agree only that it ended in such fashion as to win the friendship of Armstrong and the allegiance of his band. Probably the most accurate story of what took place is that of Rowan Herndon, an eye-witness, who says that after striving a long time without either man prevailing, Lincoln said: 'Jack, let's quit. I cant throw you — you cant throw me.' [6] Armstrong agreed and the matter was ended in fun. This, indeed, was but natural; for, as one of the band declared, Lincoln's good humor, wit, and flashing but friendly repartee, had already drawn 'him into our notice.' [7] Whatever happened, the Clary Grove Boys and their leader became, from that moment, warm friends of Lincoln and their friendship grew more ardent as time passed.[8]

[1] Herndon, I, 82. And see especially *Lincoln and New Salem*, 25–6. The analysis of the character of the Clary Grove Boys in this brochure is made from first-hand information obtained on the ground where these vigorous young men lived. The description of them in Nicolay and Hay (I, 79–80) as merely brutal creatures is pure imagination.

[2] Short to Herndon, July 7, 1865. Weik MSS.

[3] *Lincoln and New Salem*, 13. Clary's store was in reality a saloon and was about thirty steps from Offut's store. *Ib.*, 23.

[4] Rutledge to Herndon, no date, but 1866. Weik MSS.

[5] *Lincoln and New Salem*, 23.

[6] Henry McHenry's statement, Oct. 10, 1866. Weik MSS.

[7] Clary's statement. Weik MSS.

[8] Rutledge to Herndon, no date, but 1866. Weik MSS. Also *Lincoln and New Salem*, 25.

It would be hard to place too much emphasis upon the devotion to Lincoln of these hearty young ruffians. He 'so managed . . . as to obtain complete control over them,' testifies Dr. Jason Duncan, one of the two physicians in New Salem, a warm friend of Lincoln, who watched his conduct with curious but cordial interest.[1] So great was his influence with his 'gang,' that at his command they would give up their most cherished project. One day Lincoln stopped them from rolling down hill in a barrel an old man who, for a gallon of whisky, had agreed to be thus handled.[2] Time and again he gave them proof that he was the strongest man New Salem ever had known; in wrestling bouts or the lifting of tremendous weights,[3] in running, jumping, and all manner of sport, Lincoln beat every one.[4] He was particularly fond of wrestling [5] and, in jumping contests, would wait till the last and then jump further than the best, bounding astonishing distances.[6] He was fearless, too, yet peaceable; and he sought, usually with success, to compose quarrels and stop fist fights.[7] Lincoln's interference with these combats was not rough, admonitory, self-assertive. 'Let's stop it,' he would say to an onlooker, and the two would separate the fighters, Lincoln laughing and joking while doing so. 'We never failed,' narrates one who thus helped him.[8] Yet sometimes, when a fight was arranged according to the custom of the time, Lincoln would act as 'second' for one of the antagonists.[9]

[1] Statement of Jason Duncan, no date. Weik MSS.

[2] Clary's statement. Short to Herndon, July 7, 1865, says Lincoln was not concerned in the affair. Weik MSS.

[3] 'I have seen him frequently take a barrel of whiskey by the chimes and lift it up to his face as if to drink out of the bung hole' — and he did this 'with the greatest ease.' R. B. Rutledge to Herndon, no date, but 1866. Weik MSS.

James Short says that he saw Lincoln lift '1000 pounds of shot by main strength.' Short to Herndon, July 7, 1865. Weik MSS.

J. Rowan Herndon testifies that Lincoln was 'By fare the stoutest man that i ever took hold of i was a mear child in his hands and i Considered myself as good a man as there was in the Cuntry untill he come about i saw him Lift Betwen 1000 and 1300 lbs of Rock waid in a Box.' J. R. Herndon to Herndon, May 28, 1865. Weik MSS.

[4] Clary's statement. Weik MSS.

[5] N. W. Branson to Herndon, Aug. 3, 1865. Weik MSS.

[6] Duncan's statement. Weik MSS.

[7] *Ib.* Also J. R. Herndon to Herndon, Aug. 6, 1865. Weik MSS.

[8] Russell B. Godbey's statement. Weik MSS.

[9] Such fights 'were conducted with as much ceremony and punctiliousness as ever

Most astonishing to his militant admirers Lincoln could read, an accomplishment only of the elect beyond their world. Then, too, he was the best fun-maker they had ever met and kept them laughing at jokes and shouting over roaring tales, not too delicate or subtle for their understanding. Yet he was no 'hail-fellow-well-met,' never familiar, although not aloof, and always respected the opinions of others.[1] Stranger still: while the Clary Grove Boys drank prodigiously and swore crashingly, and while Lincoln neither swore nor drank, he did not rebuke his boisterous, rollicking, aggressive associates.

Above all, they found that Lincoln was scrupulously truthful, and honest to well-nigh painful exactitude. What he said could be depended upon absolutely; and Lincoln's name became a synonym for fair dealing. Indeed precise truthfulness and meticulous honesty were his most striking characteristics.[2] So just was he that, on the regular Saturday holidays, Lincoln always was agreed upon as judge of contests of every kind and his decision accepted without question.[3] Finally, and not least in the eyes of the Clary Grove Boys, he stood by his friends — and with force if force were necessary. Lincoln became their hero, as much beloved as he was admired.

Presently Offut enlarged his enterprises by renting the mill on the river below his store;[4] and Lincoln ran from store to mill. His principal work at the mill was to unload, measure, and settle for sacks of grain brought in by farmers.[5] Offut also re-

graced the duelling ground.' A notable fight of this kind was that between Henry Clark and Ben Wilcox, in which Lincoln acted as second for Clark who was badly whipped. The seconds took the combatants to the river to wash and help dress them. Wilcox's second, who was a very small man said: 'Well Abe, my man has whipped yours, and I can whip you.' Lincoln agreed, provided the other would 'chalk out his size on Mr. Lincoln's person, and every blow struck outside of that mark should be counted [as a] foul.' Thereupon everybody burst into laughter and the matter ended in boisterous good humor. Rutledge to Herndon, no date, but 1866. Weik MSS. And see *Lincoln and New Salem*, 28.

[1] Duncan's statement. Weik MSS. [2] *Ib.*

[3] Rutledge's statement. Weik MSS. Also Onstot, 54. One of these sports, 'gander pulling,' was particularly brutal. A live gander was hung by the legs from the limb of a tree, the contestants riding at utmost speed beneath the bird and snatching at its greased head. The rider who succeeded in pulling off the head, won the 'match.' *Ib.*, 53.

[4] *Lincoln and New Salem*, 22.

[5] Duncan's statement. Weik MSS. The mill was a saw-mill as well as grist-mill and supplied the vicinity with meal, flour and lumber. R. B. Rutledge's statement.

solved to navigate the Sangamon. The fact that the river was frozen in winter and shallow in summer troubled him not at all. He would put runners under the boat for ice and rollers in dry seasons; [1] and, with Lincoln in charge, 'By thunder! she'd have to go!' [2]

But the promoter's business soon languished and finally stopped altogether — 'petered out,' as Lincoln put it, and the little man suddenly disappeared.[3] Early in 1832, then, Lincoln found himself without a job or any means of earning a livelihood, for no work offered. He planned another trip to New Orleans and spent the winter preparing timber for a flatboat; [4] but a diversion more to his liking was presented to him. The extreme honesty of Offut's clerk had already won for him the appellation of 'Honest Abe,' [5] the political value of which was evident and basic. It was 'the height of ambition,' relates an Illinois politician of the period, of all aspiring men 'to get to the legislature.' [6] Lincoln was yearning for the distinction, and told Rowan Herndon that if he had been in New Salem instead of on Offut's flatboat trip to New Orleans, he would have run for the Legislature at that time.[7] Members of the General Assembly were to be elected in mid-summer, and Lincoln determined to become a candidate.[8]

The little community, and, indeed, all Illinois then seethed with politics. Political parties, as that term is now understood, did not exist; and while, roughly speaking, men were called Republicans or Democrats, such political alignments as existed were rather by groups attached to leaders. There were Jackson men and Clay men and followers of other conspicuous personages. In Illinois there were factions, rather than parties. No formal nominations of candidates were made and those who wished to stand for office merely announced their candidacies with a statement of the things they advocated; although, before

[1] Smoot to Herndon, May 7, 1866. Weik MSS. [2] Herndon, I, 74.

[3] Short to Herndon, July 7, 1865. Weik MSS. Also *Lincoln and New Salem*, 34, 38.

[4] J. R. Herndon to Herndon, May 28, 1865. Weik MSS.

[5] *Lincoln and New Salem*, 35–6.

[6] Ford, 103. [7] J. R. Herndon to Herndon, May 28, 1865. Weik MSS.

[8] It has been said that friends urged Lincoln to run, but no evidence of this has been discovered.

announcement, the most prudent office-seekers always consulted a caucus of friends.[1]

Local and state campaigns were almost wholly personal — visiting voters and their families, forming friendships, sometimes making speeches. Candidates ran on local hobbies.[2] Voting was influenced, well-nigh exclusively, by personal motives; and success at elections depended almost wholly upon individual friendships the candidate had made.[3] However, attachment to great national figures, such as Jackson or Clay, was a background from which local and state candidates had to work. Illinois was, at that time, overwhelmingly and combatively for Jackson and in Sangamon County the President was then strong,[4] his warfare on the Bank of the United States having brought to his standard most poor people and those of only moderate means.[5] Bold was the office-seeker who did not declare allegiance to Jackson.[6]

But Lincoln was a Clay man and said so; and at the Presidential election in November his first vote for President was cast for his hero, Henry Clay.[7] He was not offensive about his partiality for the Kentucky statesman, however, nor even aggressive. In friendly fashion he merely told his friends of his views. Still, since Clay was only second to Jackson in popularity among the people of Illinois,[8] he did not lose much by his preference for the great leader. Such were his situation and attitude when, on March 9, 1832, Lincoln issued an 'address to the people of Sangamon County' in support of his candidacy for the legislature, formally announced in the address. It was his first public utterance and he had toiled over it painfully, John McNamar

[1] Ford, 55, 201. [2] McNamar to Herndon, June 4, 1866. Weik MSS.

[3] Ford, 88–9.

[4] Duncan's statement. Weik MSS.; *Lincoln and New Salem*, 41–2.

[5] Ford, 200. Ford says that all who were opposed to wealth rallied to Jackson.

[6] *Ib.*, 103. For a detailed yet condensed treatment of politics in Illinois from 1830 to 1834, see *The Frontier State*, 1818–1848: Theodore Calvin Pease, 136–49.

[7] Duncan's statement. Weik MSS. Lincoln was 'the Great admirer of Henry Clay.' J. R. Herndon to Herndon, Aug. 6, 1865. Weik MSS.

[8] *My Own Times:* Gov. John Reynolds, 161. Clay 'stood extremely well with the masses. He was the second choice of the State, and was my second choice also.'

Although a Jackson champion, Gov. Reynolds was an enthusiastic admirer of Clay whom he calls the great leader of the Whig party. *Ib.*, 292.

the merchant,[1] Mentor Graham the school teacher and perhaps other friends, helping him.

The address was long, for Lincoln had not yet learned the art of condensation of which, in time, he was to become the master. 'In accordance with an established custom and the principles of true Republicanism,' he pompously says, it is his 'duty' to tell the people what he thinks of local affairs. No controversy for Abraham Lincoln over national questions! Most people were against him on those matters; so why arouse antagonism and lose votes unnecessarily!

But he is for internal improvements — the 'poorest and most thinly populated countries' needed 'good roads [and] navigable streams.' 'No person will deny' that. Who can object to railroads and canals — 'provided they cost nothing.' Paying for them is the rub. However Sangamon County must have a railroad and Lincoln wants it clearly understood that he emphatically favors the newly agitated project of a railroad from the Illinois River through Jacksonville to Springfield — but not now.

Think of the cost, $290,000! It is 'heart-appalling'! Better improve the Sangamon. It can be made navigable six months at least every year for vessels of from twenty-five to thirty tons and others of 'much greater burden a part of the time.' Lincoln knows what he is talking about, he says, having given 'particular attention' to the subject; and he reminds voters of his flatboat and other experiences on the Sangamon.

Lenders of money had been and were charging excessive interest; Lincoln is for a law fixing rates on loans. He denounces usury — that 'baneful and corroding system' by which what amounted to a 'direct tax' is laid on 'each county for the benefit of a few individuals only.' It can be stopped 'without materially injuring any class of people;' for, of course, 'in cases of extreme necessity, there could always be means found to cheat the law.'

Lincoln is strong for education, too, the 'most important' subject of all. Indeed it is 'vital' that everybody shall be able

[1] 'I corrected at his request some of the Grammatical errors in his ferst addres to the voters of Sangamon Co. his principal Hoby being the navigation of the Sangamon river.' McNamar to Geo. U. Miles, May 5, 1866. Weik MSS.

'to read the histories of his own and other countries, by which he may duly appreciate the value of our free institutions, . . . to say nothing of . . . all being able to read the Scriptures, and other works both of a religious and moral nature.' Still, Lincoln will not presume 'to dictate any plan or system' of education; but he is for education generally, for will it not advance 'morality, sobriety, enterprise, and industry?'

Then there are defects in existing laws. 'Many respectable men have suggested' that several statutes 'require alterations.' But Lincoln reminds voters that he had not first suggested the matter; that had been done by others. It is likely that 'the framers of those laws were wiser than myself' and, therefore, he will not lead an assault upon them; but if they 'are first attacked by others . . . I should feel it both a privilege and a duty to take that stand which, in my view, might tend most to the advancement of justice.' He is hesitant as to particular reforms, but bold for 'justice' as a general proposition.

Lincoln concludes by apologizing for having been 'more presuming than becomes me . . . considering the great degree of modesty which should always attend youth.' Only because he must disclose his mind fully has he been so specific in his address. 'I have spoken as I have thought.' True he may be wrong, but since 'it is better only sometimes to be right than at all times to be wrong,' he will abandon his opinions as soon as he finds them 'to be erroneous.'

The address ends by an appeal to the sympathy of the community; Lincoln's greatest ambition, he says, is 'that of being truly esteemed by my fellow-men, by rendering myself worthy of their esteem.' He is young; many do not know him. 'I was born, and have ever remained, in the most humble walks of life. I have no wealthy or popular relations or friends to recommend me. . . . My case is thrown exclusively upon the independent voters of the country' and, if they elect him, he will work hard to repay them. 'But, if the good people in their wisdom shall see fit to keep me in the background, I have been too familiar with disappointments to be very much chagrined.' [1]

Thus, at twenty-three years of age and within seven months

[1] *Works*, I, 1–9.

of his coming to New Salem, we find Lincoln a candidate for office; and we see in the vagueness and dexterity of his first public utterance the characteristics of the natural politician, a type of which he was to become, excepting only Jefferson, the supreme example. We observe, too, that cleverness and caution which distinguished his every public manœuver, and discomfited the most skilled antagonists.

No sooner was Lincoln's appeal to the voters issued, than two incidents occurred which greatly strengthened him politically. For three years the navigation of the Sangamon had been the one great subject of local discussion. Captain Vincent Bogue of Springfield firmly believed that a steamboat could ascend the river as far as that town. In January, 1832, he wrote from Cincinnati that, as soon as the ice broke up, he would bring such a vessel from there to Springfield. In due course a glowing advertisement appeared in the *Sangamo Journal* announcing the imminent departure from the Ohio city of 'the splendid, upper-cabin steamer *Talisman*.' Prodigious was the sensation. At last the optimists were to be vindicated, the scoffers put to rout.

The boat reached Beardstown where, as requested by Captain Bogue in his first announcement, it was met by several men, Lincoln among them, equipped with poles and long-handled axes to cut and push away overhanging branches and other obstructions. Lincoln took charge, and brought this craft of hope and promise triumphantly to the landing place near Springfield.[1] As the vessel moved upstream, several boys on horseback kept pace with it on shore, among them one of twelve, whose admiration of the bold and skilful navigator was intense, and years later was to develop into devotion and well-nigh worship. Thus William H. Herndon first saw Lincoln,[2] into whose life and career his own was to be so intimately woven.

The arrival of the *Talisman* set all Springfield frantic with joy. At the courthouse the steamboat Captain whom Bogue had employed — 'a vainly dressed fellow from the East' [3] — and his crew were given an ardent reception. There were dancing and festivity, whisky flowed, the gaudy commander of the *Talisman* and a woman who accompanied him as his wife, but was not,

[1] Bogue's Mill. Herndon, 1, 88. [2] *Ib.*, 87. [3] *Ib.*, 88.

got drunk, the *Sangamo Journal* printed rhymed ecstasies.[1] Receding water warned the owner and his Captain that the return voyage must be made at once. Lincoln and Rowan Herndon were employed for forty dollars each to pilot the craft as far as Beardstown.[2] Four miles a day [3] the vessel crept down the Sangamon, the falling current barely floating her. At New Salem the mill dam had to be partly torn out, causing a night's delay. But all difficulties were overcome at last, and Lincoln safely brought the *Talisman* to Beardstown, from which place he walked back to New Salem,[4] the celebrity of the hour.[5]

Then followed an event still more advantageous to his political fortunes. Lincoln himself passed around his candidate's address in the form of a handbill, the favorite method of public appeal; [6] but before much campaigning could be done, everybody was startled by the news that Black Hawk and his braves were on the war-path, pillaging settlements, murdering settlers, and spreading terror along Rock River. The old Chieftain and his young men had returned to their ancestral lands which, by some sort of treaty, the government had acquired in 1804,[7] and which, after a stern show of military force by national and state troops in 1831 and a largess of corn, Black Hawk had agreed not to attempt to occupy again.[8]

Although a large number of soldiers and others of the regular army were on the ground soon after the Indians came, reinforce-

[1] Verses written by a lawyer, E. P. Oliphant, are printed in Herndon, I, 68, and frequently reprinted.

[2] J. R. Herndon to Herndon, June 11, 1865. Weik MSS. [3] Herndon, I, 89.

[4] J. R. Herndon to Herndon, June 11, 1865.

[5] Out of this venture grew the first civil action against Lincoln in the Sangamon Circuit Court. With Nelson Alley he gave, October 30, 1832, a note for $104.87½, for the benefit of the creditors of V. A. Bogue. The exact nature of the transaction is not known, but Alley defaulted and in September, 1833, a default judgment was entered against Lincoln. The records show that he paid in full, March 17, 1834. *Litigant:* Townsend, 46–54. George Forquer was attorney for the plaintiff.

[6] Reynolds, 189.

[7] Black Hawk stoutly denied that the lands ever had been sold. McCall to father, June 17, 1831. *Letters from the Frontier:* George A. McCall, 230.

[8] General Atkinson in command of the National troops in 1831 gave Black Hawk 60,000 bushels of corn which then cost five cents the bushel; and some thought that it was to get another such subsidy, that the old Chief again brought his warriors across the Mississippi. 'Early Times at Fort Winnebago:' Satterlee Clark, *Wis. Hist. Coll.*, VIII, 312.

ments were thought necessary. Governor John Reynolds called for volunteers from the militia of northwestern Illinois.[1] So great was the fear of the Indians, that nearly all men of fighting age responded. Candidates and those ambitious for political advancement quickly seized the opportunity; and, one of them, Thomas Ford, who later became Governor of the State, declares in his frank *History of Illinois* that the Black Hawk War created many political careers. 'Jack Falstaff never slew as many men in buckram as each and every one of these Illinois politicians did,' chronicles a politician of the time.[2]

Lincoln was a member of the militia to which all men between the ages of eighteen and forty-five were, by law, compelled to belong,[3] and had been made captain of the local company.[4] Out of work, penniless, a candidate for office, he promptly volunteered for thirty days' service [5] against the 'British band,' as Black Hawk and his warriors were universally called.[6] To voters, however, Lincoln's prompt enlistment was an exhibition of pure patriotism. In the language of the place and time, as expressed by a comrade and friend, he 'voluntered to Serve his Cuntry with the Ballance of the Patriotick Boys to Defend the frontier sett[l]ers . . . from the Savages tomihack and skelping

[1] Reynolds, 224.

[2] 'Reminiscences of Early Chicago:' Wentworth, Fergus Hist. Series I, No. 8, 26.

[3] Act, Jan. 25, 1826; *Laws of Illinois*, 1826, 1–44. This law was comprehensive and well drawn. It required the enrolment of 'all free male white inhabitants' of the age stated; that each militiaman 'provide himself with a good musket, fusee or rifle, with proper accoutrements;' and that commissioned officers 'shall be armed with a sword and pair of pistols.'

If any officer or private refused to serve 'either by himself or a substitute,' he was liable to be punished as a deserter and provision was made for drafting, exemptions, and substitutes. Only persons physically unfit and those 'conscientiously scrupulous of bearing arms' could be exempted in peace time by paying one dollar and fifty cents annually (reduced to seventy-five cents in 1830, *Laws*, 96); and in case of invasion, etc., only by furnishing a substitute.

Captains were elected by the men after five days' notice. The Sangamon County militia belonged to the first division of the State forces.

[4] *Lincoln and New Salem*, 38.

[5] Clary's statement. Weik MSS.

[6] George A. McCall to his father, June 16, 1831. McCall, 225. Black Hawk's name was Mucatah Muhicatah. He was a Chief of the Sacs, born about 1767, and was a staunch adherent of the British, for whom he fought in the War of 1812, and who always befriended him. Duis, 97–8.

For a good account of the Black Hawk War from the settlers' point of view, see Ford, 109, *et seq.*

Knife.'[1] With others, Lincoln was enrolled, April 21, 1832, at Richland,[2] a village not far from New Salem. Among those who enlisted were his friends from Clary's Grove, who brought about Lincoln's election as captain of his company,[3] which, as William Miller, another soldier in that conflict testifies, 'was the hardest set of men he ever saw.'[4] One of Lincoln's comrades, J. R. Herndon, says that they made him captain 'By a unamis [unanimous] vote.'[5] Jack Armstrong was made sergeant[6] and Bill Kirkpatrick quartermaster.[7]

At Beardstown, where all troops met, Lincoln's company was attached to a mounted command.[8] Little of note occurred during the month for which the men had enlisted. There was some uncomfortable marching and, at one time, food was scarce for three or four days. While everybody, Lincoln most of all, was eager to meet the enemy,[9] they never came in sight of the Indians, although they reached the place of Stillman's defeat soon after that disaster.[10]

[1] J. R. Herndon to Herndon, May 28, 1865. Weik MSS.

[2] Muster Roll, Records War Dept. It would seem that the men were compelled to go. Roil [Royal] A. Clary says that he was 'drafted' twice (Clary's statement. Weik MSS.), and T. H. Onstot records that his father, Henry Onstot, hired a substitute, John Hillis, for thirty dollars and a rifle. Onstot, 17.

[3] *Lincoln and New Salem*, 38–40.

[4] B. F. Irwin to Herndon, Sept. 22, 1866. Weik MSS.

[5] J. R. Herndon to Herndon, May 28, 1865. Weik MSS.

[6] *Lincoln and New Salem*, 40. [7] Clary's statement. Weik MSS.

[8] 'We were all mounted men.' *Ib.* Also Muster Roll, Records War Dept.

[9] B. F. Irwin to Herndon, Sept. 22, 1866. Weik MSS. Irwin says that Lincoln wanted to get into a fight with the Indians just to see how his company 'would meet Powder and Lead.'

[10] Clary's statement. Weik MSS.

One private in Lincoln's company relates that, when in camp at the mouth of Henderson River on the Mississippi, the captain was arrested and his sword taken from him for a day, because he had violated an order not to discharge any firearm within fifty steps of the camp; and that, at another time, when on Rock River, Lincoln was again arrested and made to carry a wooden sword for two days, as punishment for his company's having gotten drunk on liquor stolen from the officers and being unable to march. D. H. Pantier to Herndon, July 21, 1865. Weik MSS.

These tales are improbable, since no mention is made of the incidents by any other soldier or by any officer in the army, or by Lincoln himself. Pantier told these stories nearly thirty years afterwards. He admits, however, that Lincoln knew nothing of the theft of the wine, whisky, and brandy, or of the carousal that followed.

Another of Lincoln's men declares that an Indian came into camp or was captured and that 'our boys thought he was a spy,' and were about to shoot him; but that Lincoln 'jumped between our men and the Indian' and saved him. When somebody

William Cullen Bryant, then thirty-eight years of age, editor of the *New York Evening Post*, was making a tour of Illinois at that time, saw the troops, and thus describes them: 'They were a hard-looking set of men, unkempt and unshaved, wearing shirts of dark calico, and sometimes calico capotes;' and he adds that 'some of the settlers complained that they [the soldiers] made war upon the pigs and chickens.' The author of 'Thanatopsis' met Captain Lincoln, 'a raw youth, in whose quaint and pleasant talk' the poet and editor was greatly interested.[1]

When not on the march, the men lolled in the shade of trees by day, or gathered around camp fires at night, singing, telling stories, playing cards, cutting pranks.[2] Lincoln told more and better stories than anybody,[3] often spinning yarns 'until the lights were ordered out.'[4] Indeed, daily events supplied him with materials for new stories which he used throughout his career.[5] Then, too, the genial Captain jumped, ran, boxed, and wrestled better than any man in the expedition.[6] At Beardstown, however, where the troops gathered immediately after enlistment, Lorenzo D. Thompson of St. Clair County, in a wrestling bout, threw Lincoln at the first test; but Lincoln then threw Thompson twice.[7] When the thirty days were up, Lincoln was easily the most popular man in the whole army.[8]

Governor Reynolds, who was with the troops when the term of enlistment of Lincoln's company expired,[9] appealed to the

murmured, thinking Lincoln cowardly, he said: 'If any one doubts my courage Let him try it.' Clary's statement. Weik MSS.

This, too, may be imaginary, nobody else who was present having ever said anything about such a dramatic circumstance.

[1] *Prose Writings of William Cullen Bryant*, edited by Parke Godwin, II, 20.

[2] George M. Harrison (of Lincoln's company) to Herndon, Dec. 20, 1866; Clary's statement. Weik MSS.

[3] J. R. Herndon to Herndon, May 28, 1865. Weik MSS.

[4] Duis, 123.

[5] 'Mr. Lincoln had an inexhaustible supply of stories based upon his experiences in this war.' Wentworth, 27.

[6] J. R. Herndon to Herndon, May 28, 1865. Weik MSS.

[7] Rutledge to Herndon, no date, but 1866. Weik MSS.

[8] Harrison to Herndon, Dec. 20, 1866; J. R. Herndon to same, May 28, 1865. Weik MSS. A member of his company testifies that he 'Loved all of them as they Loved him.' *Ib.* 'He was decidedly the most popular man in the army.' Duis, 123.

[9] General McCall, then a captain in the Regular Army, thus describes the appearance

men to stay for twenty days more. Most of them went home, but Lincoln and some others remained.[1] 'I was out of work and, there being no danger of more fighting, I could do nothing better than enlist again,' he explained many years afterward.[2] So on May 27, 1832, we find him enrolled in the company of Captain Elijah Iles [3] which was attached to a force called 'the spy batallion.' [4] He was mustered in by a young Lieutenant of the regular army, who nearly thirty years later was to be the dramatic figure of the opening act of the Civil War, Robert Anderson, 2nd Lieutenant of the 3rd U.S. Artillery. When his twenty days were up Lincoln enlisted for the third time, June 16, in the company of Captain Jacob M. Early for thirty days more.[5]

Although he saw no fighting Lincoln witnessed the results of the skirmish at Kellogg's Grove, June 25, and helped bury five men whom the Indians had scalped. 'I remember just how those men looked as we rode up the little hill where their camp was,' said he, when describing the incident long afterwards. 'The red light of the morning sun was streaming upon them as they lay heads towards us on the ground. And every man had a round, red spot on top of his head, about as big as a dollar where the redskins had taken his scalp. It was frightful, but it was grotesque, and the red sunlight seemed to paint everything all over. I remember that one man had on buckskin breeches.' [6]

On July 16, 1832, Lincoln was mustered out[7] at Black River,

of Governor Reynolds at the front. General Gaines sent his aid, Captain McCall, to invite the Governor to breakfast. McCall found Reynolds in a cart with leather curtains: 'There, *Jupiter tonans!* there lay his linsey-woolsey Excellency, coiled upon a truss of tarnished straw;' he declined breakfast because he had had 'chills and fever' for three days. McCall to his father, July 1, 1831. McCall, 238.

[1] Clary's statement. Weik MSS. Also Muster Roll, Records War Dept.; and *Lincoln and New Salem*, 40.

[2] Lincoln's statement to Herndon, Herndon, I, 100. Also see *Lincoln and New Salem*, 41.

[3] Muster Roll, Records War Dept.

[4] *History Black Hawk War:* Wakefield, 203, note 6; 207, note 5.

[5] Records War Dept. Early was in 1836 representative from Sangamon County in the State Legislature.

[6] *Lincoln and New Salem*, 41.

[7] Muster Roll, Records War Dept. This Muster Roll is dated 'Black River.'

Wisconsin.[1] As his horse had been stolen the night before, he returned on foot and by canoe to New Salem.[2]

Thus Lincoln tided over three otherwise destitute months from April to July, 1832. At home once more, with cash in his pocket, he took up his candidacy, which had not suffered from his martial adventure. The boys who had returned several weeks before were his ardent champions. About the camp fires he had told them of his ambition and, as one of the men of his squad relates, 'the mess immediately pitched upon him as our standard-bearer, and he accepted.'

Dressed in his 'mixed jeans coat,' the 'clawhammer' tails of which were so short that he could not sit upon them, 'flax and tow-linen pantaloons and a straw hat' and wearing 'pot-metal boots,'[3] Lincoln went about soliciting votes. Frank and open in manner, always tactful and conciliatory, he avoided controversy and tried, successfully, to make people like him.[4] He made speeches whenever he could find a crowd; and the first of these is worthy of quotation as suggesting the method of the young politician before pioneer hearers and because of an incident at the time which got him more votes than any speech could possibly have secured.[5]

'The Speach hee made was at Paps Vill,' relates a hearer; 'thar was a large gathering thar on account of a sale of goods hee was the only candadate thar and was call on to make a Speach.'[6] Just before he began his first speech as a candidate, a fight broke out and soon became general, as usually was the case. One of his friends, Rowan Herndon, who had whipped Jesse Dodson, was set upon by Dodson's friends and was being badly mauled;

[1] Among other officers of the regular army who served in the Black Hawk War were Colonel Zachary Taylor, Lieutenant Albert Sidney Johnson, Lieutenant Jefferson Davis, and Lieutenant Robert Anderson; among the Illinois volunteers were E. D. Baker, John T. Stuart, and Lincoln. Duis, 121–3.

For a recent, accurate and condensed account of the Black Hawk War, see *The Frontier State:* Pease, 150–72.

[2] Harrison to Herndon, Dec. 20, 1866. Weik MSS. Also *Lincoln and New Salem,* 40.

[3] A. Y. Ellis to Herndon, June 5, 1866; Herndon, I, 104.

[4] Duncan's statement. Weik MSS.

[5] J. R. Herndon to Herndon, June 21, 1865. Weik MSS.

[6] James A. Herndon to Herndon, May 29, 1865; J. R. Herndon to same, May 28, 1865. Weik MSS.

Lincoln jumped down from the platform or wagon, and, seizing Herndon's principal assailant by neck and trouser seat, threw him 'twelve feet' — which, it appears, stopped the conflict.[1] Rowan Herndon's own statement is that he was attacked by 'a set of Ruffings and they atempted to shoe foul play he [Lincoln] piched in and Piched them out Like they ware Boys and told them his friend Could whip the whole of them one at a time that ended the fus.' [2]

Returning to the speaking place, Lincoln is said thus to have addressed the quieted gathering: 'Fellow Citizens, I presume you all know who I am — I am humble Abraham Lincoln. I have been solicited by many friends to become a candidate for the Legislature. My politics are short and sweet, like the old woman's dance. I am in favor of a national bank. I am in favor of the internal improvement system and a high protective tariff. These are my sentiments and political principles. If elected I shall be thankful; if not it will be all the same.' [3]

This was the only time, so far as recorded, that Lincoln made reference to national issues in his first political campaign. For the most part, he stuck to the advocacy of improving the Sangamon River. In the few days remaining before the election, he busily went from cabin to cabin, from one meeting place to another, making friends and delivering short speeches,[4] but, in order to offend nobody, never talking politics.[5] This, indeed, was the common practice of the time; candidates, says a participant in these early campaigns, usually 'agreed with all opinions, and promised everything.' [6] Lincoln's gift for anecdote was his favorite and most effective means of appeal. To a crowd at Island Grove, his address consisted largely of stories of a kind that drew the boys after him.[7] Whisky was plentiful at all meetings,[8] but Lincoln never indulged in it.

[1] J. R. Herndon to Herndon, May 28, and June 21, 1865; also James A. Herndon's statement, no date. Weik MSS.

[2] J. R. Herndon to Herndon, May 28, 1865. Weik MSS.

[3] As written from memory in 1865 by A. Y. Ellis who was present at the Pappsville meeting in 1832. Herndon, I, 104.

[4] J. R. Herndon to Herndon, May 28, 1865. Weik MSS.

[5] Onstot, 54. [6] Ford, 202.

[7] A. Y. Ellis to Herndon: Herndon, I, 104. Ellis through 'modesty and veneration' refused to repeat these tales, although he remembered them well. [8] Ross, 31–2.

Whenever they could, the Clary Grove Boys went with Lincoln, ready to fight anybody who criticised their chief.[1] At election time they were at the polls in New Salem eager to vote for Lincoln, whose local popularity was so great, however, that their combative support was neither needed nor displayed. So warm was the friendship for him that violent Democrats supported Lincoln, Clay man as he was, as ardently as they did Jackson himself.[2] Still, it was to the Clary Grove Boys that Lincoln owed his principal support.[3] At that time, voting was done by word of mouth, the voter speaking the name of the candidate he preferred. Of two hundred and eight preferences thus expressed at New Salem, all but three were for Lincoln.[4] In the county as a whole, however, he was beaten, although receiving a good vote, much larger indeed than several other candidates. But the period of his citizenship of Sangamon County was too brief to secure the acquaintance and reputation necessary for a successful candidacy for office. As will presently appear, this defect was speedily remedied.

The fires of political ambition had been lighted in Lincoln's breast, never to die out. Rather they had been fanned anew, for they had been burning long before. He disliked physical labor and wanted only to read and meet people. Work in a store gave him these opportunities. There were three stores in New Salem, one owned by Samuel Hill, the postmaster, who had, as silent partner, John McNamar, the most prudent and enterprising man of business in the whole community; another by Reuben Radford; the third by two brothers, James and Rowan Herndon, who opened their store in 1832.[5] But none of these trading places needed a clerk; for a time, Lincoln did nothing.

James Herndon 'didn't like' New Salem and promptly sold his share to William F. Berry; [6] and not long afterwards, Rowan

[1] *Lincoln and New Salem*, 41–2.

This was an election for Congress, with Joseph Duncan and Jonathan H. Pugh as candidates.

[2] Duncan's statement. Weik MSS. Squire Godbey was one such Democratic supporter of Lincoln. Godbey's statement. Weik MSS.

[3] *Lincoln and New Salem*, 27–8. [4] Herndon, I, 105.

[5] *Lincoln and New Salem*, 43–5; statement of James A. Herndon, no date. Weik MSS.

[6] *Ib.*

Herndon, in whose cabin Lincoln was boarding, also wanted to quit the business. Herndon liked and trusted him, and sold his part of the store to his boarder [1] who gave a note for the purchase price; and thus was formed the partnership of Berry and Lincoln.[2] Lincoln hired a youth of eighteen, William G. Greene, who knew every person who came to New Salem, to help him in the store, William's principal duty being to tell his employer whether purchasers could safely be given credit.[3]

For some reason the Clary Grove Boys hated Reuben Radford, who appears to have defied them in such fashion as to arouse their spirit of destructive mischief. One day they came to his store in his absence, drank his whisky, and tumbled his goods about until the place seemed to be in ruins. Radford, in terror and disgust, impulsively offered to sell his stock to anybody who would pay him four hundred dollars for it. Young Greene who was standing by took Radford's offer, giving his note to the disconsolate merchant. For the same amount, Greene offered his bargain to Lincoln who accepted; but, finding upon making an inventory, that the goods were worth more, he insisted on paying his friend and assistant, two hundred and fifty dollars additional, giving Greene the note of Berry and Lincoln for the entire amount. James Rutledge, the tavern keeper, also had some merchandise and this, too, Berry and Lincoln bought.[4] Thus the new firm became the only competitor of Hill's store for the trade of the whole vicinity about New Salem.[5]

Whether Berry drank too much of the firm's whisky, or Lin-

[1] Statement of James A. Herndon, no date; J. R. Herndon to Herndon, May 28, 1865. Weik MSS.

[2] 'Durin that Summ[e]r J. R. H. and myself moove A Stack of Goods to Salam after Mr. Lincoln was beeting for office him and Wm Barry bought out our stock.' James A. Herndon to Herndon, May 29, 1865. Weik MSS.

[3] *Lincoln and New Salem*, 22.

[4] R. B. Rutledge to Herndon, no date, but 1866. Weik MSS.

[5] The goods sold in these New Salem stores included tea, coffee, sugar, salt, whisky, blue calico, brown muslin, cotton chain and straw hats, women's hats and the like. *Lincoln and New Salem*, 13.

The 'store' was a common grocery where whisky was sold by the drink. W. McNeely to Herndon, Nov. 12, 1866. Weik MSS. This was the understanding of McNeely's father who lived in or near New Salem at the time.

Most of the 'goods bought by Berry and Lincoln were liquors.' *Lincoln and New Salem*, 45. In most towns there were no drug stores, and medicines were kept by ordinary stores. *Pioneers:* Ross, 81.

coln was too negligent and generous in measurements, or too intent on reading, gossiping, and telling stories, the business did not prosper. In a few months they sold their groceries, dry goods, and liquors to two brothers of the name of Trent who gave Berry and Lincoln a note. Before the date of payment, Trent and Trent abandoned the store and fled the county. Then Berry died and Lincoln was left burdened with accumulated debts as the sole financial result of his business experience. Not for almost twenty years was he able to make full payment.[1]

Ever since he had come to New Salem, Lincoln had read the *Sangamo Journal* published at Springfield, the *National Intelligencer*, published at Washington, the *Missouri Republican*,[2] and the *Louisville Journal*,[3] which papers came to the post-office at the little hamlet on the Sangamon. Every Saturday, as he had done in Indiana,[4] he would read the news to all who wished to hear. Thus Lincoln kept posted on what was happening in State and Nation.

So it was that in the winter of 1832 Lincoln heard again the far-off tumult of that combat in which, eventually, he was to take the leading and decisive part. On November 24, 1832, the State Convention of South Carolina adopted the historic Ordinance of Nullification, which declared the Tariff Acts of 1828 and 1832 to be 'null, void and no law,' directed the State Legislature to provide for armed resistance, declaring that 'the people of South Carolina . . . will not submit to the application of force, on the part of the Federal Government, to reduce this state to obedience,' and that if force was employed South Carolina would withdraw from the Union and organize a 'separate government, and do all other acts and things which sovereign and independent States may of right do.' [5]

[1] J. R. Herndon to Herndon, May 28, 1865. Weik MSS. These debts aggregated $1100. *Lincoln and New Salem*, 52.

[2] Branson to Herndon, Aug. 3, 1865; Chapman's Narrative, Weik MSS. Chapman says that Lincoln was a 'warm admirer' of the *National Intelligencer*. It was the organ of the National Republican party and stood for 'vested rights and sober usages.' Reynolds, 288–9.

[3] J. R. Herndon to Herndon, Aug. 6, 1865. Weik MSS. J. R. Herndon says that he also read the *Congressional Debates* and *Acts of Congress*.

[4] J. R. Herndon to Herndon, May 28 and Aug. 6, 1865. Weik MSS.

[5] *Statutes at Large of South Carolina:* Thomas Cooper, I, 329–31.

The issues debated by Hayne and Webster two years before, were taking concrete, militant form. Governor John Reynolds was about to deliver his message to the Legislature of Illinois when the news of South Carolina's defiance came, and he added a paragraph denouncing 'nullification' which must be 'firmly and promptly resisted, and prostrated by public opinion. This happy Union ought, and, I hope in God, will be sustained at all hazards.' [1]

Six days later, December 10, 1832, came Jackson's Proclamation. Attributed to Edward Livingston, Secretary of State, it was and to this day remains one of the foremost of state papers; [2] and it was to be the model used by Lincoln twenty-eight years later, when composing his First Inaugural. All arguments that ever had or have since been advanced for national supremacy and against secession, were presented in Jackson's Proclamation, and stated, too, with a moderation and kindly appeal that added to their compelling power. Thus in his twenty-fourth year Lincoln was given a supreme example of the force of calm but strong method in public discussion, even on the gravest of subjects and in the most perilous of crises.

The newspapers read by Lincoln published in full South Carolina's Ordinance of Secession and Jackson's Proclamation. Indeed these papers had printed news of the secession movement before the Convention met. The *Sangamo Journal* reproduced letters of South Carolina Unionists against Nullification and, declaring editorially that the Union was in 'imminent danger,' called upon every 'good citizen to rally around the holy banner of our Constitution.' It praised Governor Reynolds for his stand, published a picturesque letter from a New York man in Charleston describing the thrilling scenes there — the Unionists were the 'respectable' people, the 'nullies are the rabble' — and news of the sending of troops and munitions to Fort Moultrie. The *Journal* printed extracts from the appeal of Edward Everett of Massachusetts, to preserve the bulwark of the Constitution,[3] and from Southern men and Northern papers on the 'worth of

[1] Reynolds, 269.

[2] *Messages and Papers of the Presidents:* Richardson, II, 640–56.

[3] Nov. 17, 24, Dec. 8, 15, 1832. Everett's address was made in Charlestown, Mass.

the Union.' Editorially the paper declared that the only possible outcome, if nullification prevailed, was 'anarchy' and 'civil war.'

With the full Ordinance of Nullification the *Sangamo Journal* published [1] half a column from a correspondent at Charleston describing the Convention. The dramatic close of the address of that State was printed together with an editorial argument that if South Carolina seceded, Illinois could and would take from the national government her public lands. Then on December 30, appeared an 'Extra' edition of the Springfield paper with Jackson's Proclamation.

From the *Missouri Republican* Lincoln got both sides, for that paper printed extracts from journals which advocated as well as from those which opposed nullification. It published, also, two addresses of Governor Dunklin of Missouri, in support of South Carolina's action, and the inaugural address of Governor Hayne of that State. But the *Republican* contained many more speeches, articles and letters in maintenance of national authority — the great oration of Webster in Boston, part of the powerful message of Governor Marcy of New York, accounts of Union meetings all over the country, including the immense demonstration at Tammany Hall.[2] Editorially it again and again [3] denounced in words of fire the 'treasonable' conduct, 'traitorous designs,' and 'phrenzied violence' of the nullifiers, demanding that the Union 'be preserved at every hazard.' The *National Intelligencer* and *Louisville Journal* were even more emphatic and wrathful.

What effect all this had on the young politician, is unknown. Lincoln was silent then and for long afterward, although from the moment of South Carolina's action, Illinois like the rest of the country was deeply and increasingly stirred.[4] We know only that he read all that appeared in the papers taken at New Salem. The distant thunder, louder now, swelling from Charles-

[1] Dec. 22, 29, 1832.

[2] Dec. 4, 1832; Jan. 1, 8, 15, 29, 1833.

[3] Dec. 18, 25, 1832; Jan. 1, 8, 15, 22, 1833.

[4] Reynolds, 269. Gov. Reynolds says that Jackson's Proclamation was hailed by the people of Illinois as 'a kind of Godsend,' and the Legislature of the State formally approved it.

ton and the Nation's capital, and rolling across the mountains, forests and prairies, had reached him amid the log cabins on the bluffs of the Sangamon.

Out of business, loaded with debt and so depressed that his friends were much worried about him,[1] Lincoln was concerned with the immediate problem of making a livelihood. He would say nothing to cause bitterness in New Salem, whose citizens were not of one mind on South Carolina's action. One of these, the tavern keeper, James Rutledge, was a native of that State, and to the Rutledge inn Lincoln went to board in the spring of 1833,[2] his friend Rowan Herndon, at whose cabin he had been living, having moved to a farm. Before the close of the year, however, Rutledge gave up the inn which he had built in 1830, and the tavern was taken by Henry Onstot,[3] who also had a cooper shop.

To get money to pay for meals and lodging, Lincoln did all kinds of jobs, split rails, husked corn,[4] helped a young merchant, A. Y. Ellis, in running a new store, took whatever work could be found. His friends, sympathizing with Lincoln in his predicament, resolved to have him made postmaster, and, headed by Dr. Duncan, took very practical steps to secure the place for their favorite. Samuel Hill, the storekeeper, had been postmaster for the first year or two after a post office was established at New Salem. He was succeeded by another small merchant, Isaac P. Chrisman, who soon left the village, and Hill once more took the place.[5] Nobody liked him, and Lincoln's friends filed charges against him with the Department at Washington. Lincoln objected because he did not want Hill displaced for his benefit; but his supporters were obdurate and, finally, on May 7, 1833, Lincoln was made the village postmaster.[6] Thus he came into this small compensation which he

[1] Duncan's statement. Weik MSS.

[2] R. B. Rutledge to Herndon, no date, but 1866. Weik MSS.

[3] Onstot, 150.

[4] Short to Herndon, July 7, 1865. Short says that Lincoln was the best corn husker he ever saw: 'I used to consider myself very good but he would gather two loads to my one.'

[5] *Lincoln and New Salem*, 13, 50.

[6] Duncan's statement. Weik MSS. Also Records Post Office Department. In

continued to receive during the three years more that he lived in New Salem.

Soon other lucrative employment came to him. The County Surveyor was John Calhoun, one of the few New Englanders then in Sangamon. The country was now being rapidly settled,[1] demand for surveying was great and increasing, and Calhoun needed an assistant. A friend of Lincoln recommended him for the place and he was appointed.[2] Lincoln went to board at the cabin of Mentor Graham, the school teacher, who, at night, helped him to master a volume on surveying, given Lincoln by his employer.

Absorbed in calculations the two would often work until after midnight; for Lincoln had no aptitude for figures and had to labor hard and long to understand the intricacies of surveying. But within six weeks [3] he succeeded and, equipped for his task, began his work under Calhoun. This took Lincoln all over Sangamon County, broadened his acquaintance, multiplied his supporters. For he made 'hosts of friends wherever he went,' testifies Coleman Smoot, the rich man of the neighborhood, at whose house the young surveyor often stayed. Not only did his wit, kindliness, and knowledge attract the people, but his strange clothes and uncouth awkwardness advertised him, the shortness of his trousers causing particular remark and amuse-

Lincoln and New Salem, 50, it is said that Lincoln owed his appointment to the agitation of the women whose wrath was aroused because Hill would make them wait for their mail while he sold liquor and other goods. As a result a petition for the removal of Hill and the appointment of Lincoln was circulated and so numerously signed that the change was effected.

By 1833 New Salem had ceased to grow. A settlement two miles lower down the river — Petersburg — was regarded as the coming town, to be the seat of a new county — Menard — formed from Sangamon County. Yet Petersburg was a town only in name, having in the autumn of 1835 no more than two stores, two houses, and a cobbler's shop. Letter of Matthew S. Marsh, New Salem, Sept. 17, 1835, in the Barrett Collection.

[1] Duis, 138–9. Heavy immigration began in 1834.

Accounts of the Black Hawk War had tremendously advertised Illinois. Wentworth, 27–8; Reynolds, 268–9.

[2] The compensation depended upon the work done. For establishing a quarter section of land the fee was two dollars and a half; for a town lot when under forty in number, thirty-seven and a half cents, etc., and two dollars a day were allowed to the surveyor for travelling expenses when in discharge of his duties. *Laws of Illinois*, revised, 1833, 296.

[3] *Ib.*

ment. Soon the name, 'Abe Lincoln,' became a household word.[1]

Calhoun was a Democrat and an ardent follower of Jackson, but this did not prevent his admiration and liking for his deputy. He was a very handsome man of fine character and uncommon ability, had studied law in the East and was well versed in general literature. He had found school teaching more to his liking and perhaps more remunerative than practice at the bar, and had taught at the county seat before he became surveyor. John T. Stuart, a Major in the Black Hawk War, had met Lincoln during his service, and, like everybody else captivated by his talents and charm, had urged him to study law. Calhoun now gave his assistant the same advice and Lincoln resolved to become a lawyer.

From the day he came to New Salem, he read more voraciously than ever.[2] Mentor Graham had told him that a thorough knowledge of grammar was indispensable to one who wished to advance politically or to appear well in society. Asked where such a treasure could be found, the school teacher told Lincoln that a farmer, John Vance, who lived about six miles distant, owned a copy of Kirkham's *Grammar*. Thereupon Abraham, who was then boarding with Graham, rose from the breakfast table, walked to Vance's cabin, and returned with the book.

Under Graham's guidance he studied so hard and well that in an incredibly short time he knew Kirkham's rules by heart and observed them. Three decades afterward Graham declared that, having then taught for forty-five years, he never had seen any one so apt and quick at learning grammar as Lincoln was.[3] Indeed, says Graham, he was the 'most studious, diligent strait forward young man in the pursuit of a knowledge and literature than any among the five thousand I have taught in schools.' In his educational efforts Lincoln made use of his friends and

[1] Smoot to Herndon, May 7, 1866. Weik MSS.

[2] R. B. Rutledge to Herndon, Nov. 30, 1866. Weik MSS. Rutledge says that Lincoln studied Kirkham's *Grammar* and books on surveying and law; and that he read history, astronomy, philosophy, chemistry, and newspapers. Lincoln, in his Autobiography, states that he studied Flint and Gibson on surveying, 'a little.'

[3] Graham to Herndon, July 15, 1865. Weik MSS. And Rutledge to same, Nov. 30, 1866. Weik MSS.

had one of them, the boy William G. Greene, hold Kirkham, while he answered questions which Greene asked him from the volume.[1] Dr. Jason Duncan helped him, too, and relates that Lincoln mastered grammar 'in a most astonishing manner.'[2] But his greatest debt was to Mentor Graham. 'I know of my own knowledge,' writes R. B. Rutledge, that Graham did more than all others to educate Lincoln.[3]

There were many books in and around New Salem and few escaped the enquiring and insatiable Lincoln who read them, not casually and in haste, but with infinite care and thoroughness, often writing out what he read, to be sure that he understood. 'I have,' states a credible witness, 'known him to write a proposition in three different forms in order to state the meaning as clearly and simply as possible — and to spend half a day doing so.'

In his reading and study Lincoln was a very miser of time, never wasting a moment. At the store customers found him absorbed in some book, which he would instantly take up again, when he had served them.[4] Often he would stretch himself on the counter the better to pore over the pages, oblivious to all else. When going to his meals a few steps distant, or walking through the dust or mud of New Salem's street, or strolling out into the country, always an open book was in his hand or closed beneath his arm, while he murmured to himself what he had just read. Even when he chanced to be with women and girls, whom he would try to amuse, Lincoln would take a book with him and read between jokes. When passing from one group of men to another, he would read as he walked, closing the volume as he joined the company.[5]

Whether sitting, lying down, or walking, he was usually reading.[6] He read until late at night and rose at daylight to read.[7]

[1] *Lincoln and New Salem*, 29–31. [2] Duncan's statement. Weik MSS.

[3] Rutledge to Herndon, Nov. 18, 1866. Weik MSS.

[4] Same to same, Nov. 30, 1866. Weik MSS.

[5] J. R. Herndon to Herndon, Aug. 6, 1865; Rutledge to same, Nov. 30, 1866. Weik MSS.

[6] Carman to Herndon, Nov. 30, 1866.

[7] Branson to Herndon, August 3, 1865; J. R. Herndon to same, Aug. 6, 1865, and Rutledge to same, Nov. 30, 1866; James A. Herndon's statement. Weik MSS. James A.

Dressed in 'blue cotton round about coat, stoga shoes, and pale blue casinet pantaloons which failed to make the connection with either coat or socks, coming about three inches below the former and an inch or two above the latter,' [1] he went about New Salem, reading, thinking, talking to himself, seldom entirely conscious of his surroundings.

Lincoln took infinite pains to understand and remember all he read, recited poetry and history, and wrote down whole pages of books and conned them over and over.[2] So he forgot nothing.[3] While in partnership with Berry, Lincoln read Gibbon's *Decline and Fall of the Roman Empire*, Rollin's *Ancient History*, and a novel or two owned by A. Y. Ellis.[4] He read Burns and Shakespeare [5] which he probably found in the cabin of Jack Kelso, where Lincoln boarded for a short time; [6] and he spent much time over a volume on American Military Biography.[7] Frequently he would read aloud.[8] He talked a great deal about what he read, and, says Caleb Carman, would often 'Refer to that Great man Shakespeare allso Lord Byron as being a great men and Burns and of Burns Poems and Lord Nellson as being a Great Admarall and Naval Commander and Adams and He[n]ry Clay Jackson George Washington was the Greatest of all of them and was his Great favorite.' [9]

Herndon says that he often saw Lincoln at night in an open cooper's shop, 'gather up shavens and stick and feed the flame' by which he read.

[1] Short to Herndon, July 7, 1865. Weik MSS.

[2] Rutledge to Herndon, Dec. 4, 1866; J. R. Herndon to Herndon, July 6, 1865. Weik MSS.

[3] J. R. Herndon to Herndon, May 28, 1865. Weik MSS.

[4] Herndon, I, 113.

[5] Carman to Herndon, Nov. 30, 1866. Weik MSS.

[6] Kelso was an idle fellow of 'the village philosopher' type which always attracted Lincoln. Kelso lived in half of a double log cabin owned by Joshua Miller, and it was Kelso's wife who 'kept borders.' *Lincoln and New Salem*, 15. Kelso 'could catch fish when no man could get a bite' (Royal A. Clary's statement; Short to Herndon, July 7, 1865. Weik MSS.); and was called 'the champion hunter and fisherman of the village.' *Lincoln and New Salem*, 15. Kelso appears to have been utterly worthless; but it is said that he could 'recite Shakespeare and Burns by the hour.' *Ib.*, 54–5.

[7] This volume, and Rollin and Gibbon probably were in the cabin of Bennett Abell, who had 'a good Lot of history,' although McNamar, Hill, and other merchants had books. Rowan Herndon owned Lives of Washington, Jefferson, Clay, and Webster. J. R. Herndon to Herndon, Aug. 6, 1865. Weik MSS.

[8] Branson to Herndon, Aug. 3, 1865. Weik MSS.

[9] Carman to Herndon, Dec. 8, 1866. Weik MSS.

In 1833, a circus came to Springfield. It was an historic event — never before had the county seat been thus favored. All Sangamon County flocked to the attraction; thousands had never seen a circus. Among them was Lincoln who then displayed that fondness for such amusements which he never outgrew. The crowd was immense, whisky plentiful, excitement high, fun and fights marking the holiday spirit. Through it all moved Lincoln, entering into the mood and amusement of the day, and, under the tent, enjoying as much as any child the performances of acrobat and antics of clown.[1]

Indeed, next to his honesty and truthfulness which, increasingly, were the outstanding features of his character, Lincoln's love of fun and amusement was and always continued to be, most prominently displayed. His aptitude for story telling and his delight in it were given unbridled freedom in New Salem, and the tales he told, 'allways verry mery and full of fun,' were suited to the taste of his hearers. His fondness for jokes was intense, well-nigh abnormal,[2] and he even would turn his tuneless, singsong, nasal voice into an instrument of jollity. Young men and women were set into gales of laughter by Lincoln's rendering of a song called 'Legacy' in which, with ludicrous effect he substituted certain words.[3] He liked doggerel and, when a clerk or storekeeper, would convulse with applauding merriment the crowds that would fill the room evenings, by singing grotesque jingles, some of which he may have written himself.[4] His New Salem songs were of the same order as those he had been wont to shrill in Gentryville, Indiana, such, relates one who heard them, as 'Oald Oald Suckey bleuskin and the Woodpecker taping on the hollow Beach tree and a great many others that was Funny.'[5]

Yet reading, study, and meditation so absorbed him, that it would almost seem that he plunged into mirth from sheer

[1] Onstot, 47–50. Onstot tells, in great detail, the story of this circus, which, he says, caused as much excitement as the removal of the capital to Springfield.

[2] Caleb Carman to Herndon, Nov. 30, 1866. Weik MSS.

[3] R. B. Rutledge to Herndon, no date, Weik MSS.; *Lincoln and New Salem*, 32.

[4] Herndon, 1, 114, 115.

[5] Carman to Herndon, Nov. 30, 1866. Weik MSS. 'The Woodpecker' by Thomas Moore can hardly be counted as a 'funny' song.

reaction, so inconsistent are these phases of his New Salem life.

When Lincoln became deputy surveyor his reading was, of course, interrupted. But his work took him among the people and all who met him liked the friendly, jovial, obliging young man. Never by any chance did he quarrel; on the contrary, says the wife of Jack Armstrong, he would 'do anything to accommodate anybody.' [1] His personal popularity widened until it covered Sangamon County. So many Democrats favored him that the leaders of that party, among them Bowling Green,[2] the Justice of the Peace at New Salem and most influential man in the township, proposed to make him their candidate for the Legislature in 1834. His friends, says Rowan Herndon, insisted that Lincoln should run; 'Claming that they had a Wright to a member from that Part of the County he was urged By Both Political Partys to Run.' [3]

Before closing with the Democratic offer, Lincoln consulted John T. Stuart of Springfield, leader of the Republicans, who advised him to accept. Lincoln promptly did so, and under this arrangement [4] again sought election as a Representative in the General Assembly. Although 'Clay was his favorite . . . he all but worshiped his name,' [5] it would appear that no mention of the great leader was made by Lincoln during this campaign.

He issued no formal written address as he had done two years before, nor does any account exist of the speeches he made. He seems to have gone quietly about, meeting everybody he could, telling stories, cracking jokes, taking part in any work or sport that would commend him to voters. Finding a farmer and his men harvesting and being told by them that he would have to show them that he could do farm work, Lincoln said: 'boys if that is all I am shure of your votes,' and taking up the cradle

[1] Mrs. Jack (Hannah) Armstrong's statement. Weik MSS.

[2] Green was the Democratic leader in New Salem. Duncan's statement. Weik MSS. In 1830, Gov. Reynolds appointed him to be one of the Canal Commissioners of Illinois. Reynolds, 203.

[3] J. R. Herndon to Herndon, May 28, 1865. Weik MSS.

[4] Statement of Ninian W. Edwards, brother-in-law of Lincoln, Sept. 22, 1865. Weik MSS. The district was 'profoundly Democratic.' R. B. Rutledge to Herndon, no date, but 1866. Weik MSS.

[5] J. R. Herndon to Herndon, May 28, 1865. Weik MSS.

led the way all around the field.[1] He went to every gathering, making short talks, as all candidates then did,[2] accompanied, whenever possible, by the faithful Clary Grove Boys, still fighting in his behalf.[3] The support of the Democrats amply accounts for his failure to put out the customary declaration of principles or to say anything that was remembered. At Mechanicsburg, however, in one of those general fights which then were a universal practice throughout the Western country, Lincoln jumped in and compelled fair play,[4] a more effective campaign device than any speech could be. On August 4, when the votes were counted, Lincoln had received only fourteen votes less than John Dawson and was elected a representative.[5]

After the election, his life in New Salem went on as before, surveying, distributing mail, mingling with people, and reading — incessantly and forever reading. Of general literature, Lincoln liked best works on philosophy. The French political theorists had again come into vogue in America [6] and some of their writings reached New Salem. When he was about twenty-six years of age Lincoln read in them,[7] and this fact cannot be overlooked in any just appraisement of his intellectual development.

The *Age of Reason*, partly written in a French prison by Thomas Paine, and reprinted in America under the encouragement of Thomas Jefferson, had wide circulation in the United States. At the time Lincoln read it religious sentiment in the Western country, except for the scepticism among the intelligent, which so alarmed Bishop Chase, was intense, uninformed, and savagely intolerant. Any one who did not accept every word in the Bible as literal truth, or ascribe to the Deity good

[1] J. R. Herndon to Herndon, May 28, 1865. Weik MSS.

[2] Ford, 201–2.

[3] *Lincoln and New Salem*, 27–8.

[4] Statement of James Gourley, no date, but in 1866. Weik MSS.

[5] The votes stood 1390 for John Dawson, 1376 for Lincoln, 1170 for William Carpenter, and 1164 for John T. Stuart. *Illinois Election Returns:* Pease, 275.

[6] Bishop Philander Chase, who was stationed in Illinois about this time, was gravely concerned: 'Infidelity and sin stalk fearlessly abroad wherever I travel.' Chase to his son, April 14, 1837, from 'Robin's Nest,' Peoria, Ill. *Reminiscences of Bishop Chase*, II, 380.

[7] Herndon, I, 125, mentions Paine, Volney, and Voltaire; *Lincoln and New Salem*, 56.

and bad fortune, was denounced as an infidel, then the blackest of epithets. Since the *Age of Reason* assailed much of the Biblical narrative, pointing out inconsistencies and questioning the good sense and morality of many teachings, the volume was furiously denounced.[1] But frontier orthodoxy in Illinois in 1835 made no distinction between doubt of the accuracy of ecclesiastical interpretation of the scriptures on the one hand, and disbelief in God on the other.

The *Ruins* by Constantine de Volney appeared about the same time as the *Age of Reason*. The Frenchman so combined calmness of statement with dramatic method that his philosophical pages are most engaging. The author pays imaginary visits to the ancient ruins of cities and nations, and there talks to an Apparition or Phantom, who is the Genius of History and Wisdom. By this device Volney examines government, religion, nature, and the human mind. Throughout the small volume everything is tested by reason.

The book begins: 'Hail, solitary ruins, holy sepulchres and silent walls! you I invoke; to you I address my prayer. . . . Oh Ruins! to your school I will return! I will seek again the calm of your solitudes; and there, far from the afflicting spectacle of the passions, I will cherish . . . the love of man . . . and build my own happiness on the promotion of his.' Pestilence, disease, death, ruin of cities, fall of nations caused by the wrath of a vindictive God! Absurd, says Volney.

The fact that anybody would even read such books was quite enough to taint the reader with the suspicion of infidelity, and Lincoln was thought to be thus afflicted. But he was so kind, gentle, considerate, and helpful to everybody, and so beloved by the whole community, that his non-conformity to the dogmas of the time did not, in the least, affect his popularity. Now and then some extreme religionist or opposing politician used against Lincoln the report that he was an infidel, but without avail. One Snodgrass tried to get that staunch Democrat, Squire Godbey, to vote against Lincoln because Lincoln 'was a Deist'; but Godbey voted for him in spite of that fact and also,

[1] No less than twenty answers were published; and it is said that 1,500,000 copies of the *Age of Reason* were sold in England alone.

as we have seen, against the Squire's own political convictions.[1]

Moreover, as with his political views, Lincoln did not press his religious opinions upon others, nor did he conceal them from his intimates, of whom, friendly as he was, he had but one or two. 'I think that when I first knew Mr. L. he was skeptical as to the great truths of the Christian Religion,' [2] says Joshua Speed, the closest of Lincoln's friends, whose association with him began a year or two after Lincoln had read these free thinkers.

Although he mastered most books with astonishing ease and rapidity, he found law books more difficult and he studied them with a sort of passionate determination. He borrowed them from John T. Stuart, then practising law in Springfield,[3] and at an auction in that town bought Blackstone's *Commentaries*.[4] These volumes he read incessantly, and with such concentration that he often was oblivious of his surroundings. Even when at work chopping he would stop, and, sitting on the wood pile, lose himself in a law book, to the amazement of observers. 'I think,' testifies R. B. Rutledge, 'that he never avoided men until he commenced the study of law.' [5]

Excessive reading and study began to impair his health. He became so pale, emaciated and abstracted that New Salem feared that his mind was breaking. So came the first indication of that mental peculiarity which we are to observe more than once in the years that quickly follow.

Even before reading Blackstone or the law books which Stuart loaned him, Lincoln began, in embryonic fashion, to

[1] Godbey's statement. Weik MSS. It has been stated that, at this time, Lincoln wrote an essay against Christianity (Herndon to Weik, Feb. 11, 1887. Weik MSS.) but, considering Lincoln's extreme caution and his dislike of offending anybody unnecessarily, this is unlikely. Few eminent men in our history have been less polemical than Lincoln.

[2] Joshua F. Speed to Herndon, Jan. 12, 1866. Weik MSS.

[3] J. R. Herndon to Herndon, May 28, 1865. Weik MSS. Some witnesses say that Lincoln walked to Springfield to borrow books from Stuart (Gourley's statement. Weik MSS.), while others insist that he always rode in the wagons of farmers who chanced to be going to town.

[4] Duncan's statement. Weik MSS. Also *Life of Lincoln:* Isaac N. Arnold, 40. Dr. Duncan says it was when Lincoln bought Blackstone that he resolved to become a lawyer.

[5] R. B. Rutledge to Herndon, Nov. 30, 1866. Weik MSS.

practice law in New Salem, arguing a case now and then before Bowling Green who became more and more impressed by his ability. At first Squire Green allowed Lincoln to speak in his court because he was so funny. Green, who was 'an enormously fat man weighing . . . three hundred pounds and given to mirth,' would shake with laughter at Lincoln's droll humor. But soon the Squire became deeply impressed by the mind and the legal knowledge of the shabby young practitioner.[1] Lincoln, towering six feet and four inches, his long, bony finger pointed at the Justice of the Peace, who was clad only in shirt and trousers held up 'by one linen suspender over the shoulder,' would reason with immense dignity,[2] and then convulse the Squire with some ludicrous tale.

In these early attempts he relied wholly on the *Revised Laws of Illinois*, from which, says Dr. Duncan, Lincoln 'drew all his legal knowledge.' This is an over-statement, since he read thoroughly such legal volumes as Squire Green possessed.[3] He bought a book of forms, and, from it, wrote out deeds, mortgages, and other contracts for those in need of such documents, never charging anything for these small services or for his efforts before Squire Green.[4] Thus his popularity was further and permanently strengthened while he was learning the use of the simpler tools of his intended profession.

In like manner Lincoln's care of the scanty mail that came to New Salem endeared him to everybody. So few were the letters that he would carry them in his hat, a practice that he never stopped, disposing of legal and other papers in the same way in after years. The community sharply noted the difference between the treatment it received from Lincoln and the service given by those whom Lincoln left in charge of the post office, when he was absent on surveying trips, campaigning, or at the Legislature — Hill, Onstot, Carman. For Lincoln strove to please and accommodate — his substitutes merely gave out

[1] Duncan's statement. Weik MSS.; Onstot, 74. Green died of apoplexy.

[2] Duncan's statement. Weik MSS.

[3] *Lincoln and New Salem*, 54. Besides the *Statutes of Illinois*, Green had a few other law books.

[4] William G. Greene's statement and Duncan's statement. Weik MSS.

mail when it was called for. But when Lincoln thought that some one urgently wanted a letter, he would walk miles to deliver it.[1] Accounts of such incidents spread over the countryside and confirmed the good opinion of and affection for Lincoln which everybody was coming to entertain. Mentor Graham bears testimony that not only was he called 'Honest Abe' because of his rectitude, but that all loved him because he was one of 'the most *companionable* persons you will ever see in this world.'[2]

We have a glimpse of him as postmaster in a letter of a settler in New Salem, Matthew S. Marsh: 'The Post Master [Lincoln] is very careless about leaving his office open and unlocked during the day — half the time I go in and get my papers, etc., without any one being there, as was the case yesterday. The letter was only marked 25, and even if he had been there and known it was double, he would not [have] charged me any more — luckily he is a very clever fellow and a particular friend of mine. If he is there when I carry this to the office, I will get him to "Frank it."'[3] Such was the favorable opinion held of him by a fellow townsman.

Then, too, his love of children, which he showed constantly and in various ways, endeared him to everybody. He would even stop his beloved reading to play marbles with little boys, one of whom declares that Lincoln was a 'great marble player' and 'kept us small boys running in all directions gathering up the marbles he would scatter.'[4] Once he found a barefooted boy, Ab Trent, chopping wood to get money to buy shoes; Lincoln did the work for the urchin.[5] He was, indeed, a kind of elder brother to the children of New Salem, who, barefooted and clad only in a tow-linen shirt during summer and usually without shoes even in winter,[6] clustered about Lincoln whenever he appeared, fairly worshipping him. Wherever he went he had a child with him; and he did helpful kindnesses to widows and

[1] *Lincoln and New Salem*, 50.

[2] Graham to Herndon, July 15, 1865. Weik MSS.

[3] Letter of Matthew S. Marsh, Sept. 17, 1835, in the Barrett Collection.

[4] Onstot, 25, 74. [5] R. B. Rutledge's statement. Weik MSS.

[6] Onstot, 220–1. Onstot says that even as to men and women, 'boots were a luxury that few indulged in.' He, himself, never had boots until he was twelve years old and

poor people, such as gathering and chopping wood for them.[1] Lincoln's care for animals, so conspicuous in boyhood and youth, was displayed in New Salem. He was especially fond of cats, would take on his lap two kittens of Caleb Carman, play with them, compare their heads and decide that 'Jane had a beter countanance than Susan;' and when he started for Vandalia to attend the Legislature he left strict orders that the cats should have careful attention.[2]

Calhoun's term as County Surveyor expired in 1835, and his successor, Thomas M. Neale, at once reappointed Lincoln as his assistant. Thus Lincoln held and continued to hold as long as he lived in New Salem, three offices — postmaster, deputy surveyor, and Representative in the General Assembly of Illinois. Moreover, the combined fees and salaries he received were not only considerable in comparison with any amount he had ever made before; they were paid in the best money then in circulation,[3] although for surveying, Lincoln sometimes took buckskin for making trousers.[4] But he saved nothing and, failing to pay one of the notes he had so heedlessly given when trying to be a merchant, his horse and surveying instruments were taken on a judgment. James Short, at whose house Lincoln spent much time, paid the debt and restored his property.[5]

he was the first boy in Petersburg who wore such foot gear. In winter buckskin trousers, moccasins, and sometimes blue jean coats, were worn.

[1] J. R. Herndon to Herndon, May 28, 1865. Weik MSS.

[2] Carman to Herndon, Dec. 8, 1866. Weik MSS.

[3] Financial conditions were bad everywhere. In the bustling little town of Chicago, in 1835, money was so scant and poor that 'nearly every man . . . doing business was issuing his individual scrip, and the city abounded with little tickets, such as "Good in our store for ten cents," "Good for a loaf of bread," "Good for a shave," "Good for a drink."' Wentworth, Fergus, No. 7, 27.

Throughout the West specie was at a premium of from fifty to one hundred per cent. *Ib.*, 30.

[4] Godbey's statement. Weik MSS.

[5] This was the note of Berry & Lincoln for $400 which Lincoln had given to Greene who assigned it to Reuben Radford, from whom it was purchased by Peter Van Bergen. Lincoln took up this note by giving Van Bergen another note signed by himself and Greene. Van Bergen got judgment against both men. Short to Herndon, July 7, 1865. Weik MSS.

Lincoln repaid Short after he became a practising lawyer in Springfield. *Ib.*

Greene's horse, saddle, bridle and $125 in cash were also taken to satisfy the judgment; but Lincoln, considering this a debt of honor, discharged it fully in later years. *Ib.* See also *Litigant:* Townsend, 63–70.

Throughout all this time he kept at his books; only when on surveying trips did he suspend for a moment his intense study and reading. Not in after years did he acquire more knowledge in the same space of time. Indeed it is doubtful whether he ever again thought more deeply on fundamentals than during these years at New Salem.

In the midst of his studies, romance intruded, albeit with halting and uncertain footsteps. The mingling of admiration, indifference, and concern which Lincoln showed towards women is a most curious phase of his inexplicable character. Again at New Salem, that shyness appeared which caused him to shun the company of girls in Indiana.[1] As a clerk and storekeeper he disliked serving women and, in general, seemed to hold himself aloof from them; yet, acquaintance formed with particular women, Lincoln sought their society and indulged in 'innocent mischief' toward them. To women whom he knew especially well, he would 'prove . . . a complete hectorer.'[2] He was fond of the wife of Jack Armstrong, at whose house, four miles from New Salem, he would stay two or three weeks at a time when surveying; and Mrs. Armstrong made shirts for him and patched his trousers.[3] That she could not read and there were no books in the Armstrong cabin did not shorten his visits. He often went there, bringing candy for the children, and would rock a cradle while Mrs. Armstrong 'got him Abe something to eat.' Many years later he was to show his regard by defending without pay her son who was indicted and tried for murder — the boy whose cradle he rocked when a baby.[4] He liked Mrs. Bennett Abell, too, and often visited the Abell cabin, and the wife of Bowling Green had been of help to Lincoln when he was deeply troubled. But, until in his twenty-fifth year, he showed no sentiment for any individual woman, and even then only in doubtful and clouded fashion.

In 1833, Mary Owens, a cousin of Mentor Graham,[5] came

[1] Duncan's statement. Weik MSS.

[2] *Ib.*

[3] Statements of Mrs. Armstrong and Squire Godbey. Weik MSS.

[4] Statements of James Short, April 3, 1866, and of Mrs. Armstrong. Weik MSS. 'We didnt think about books papers — we worked.'

[5] Graham's second statement, no date. Weik MSS.

from Kentucky to New Salem on a visit to her sister, the wife of Bennett Abell. Miss Owens was vivacious, witty, spirited, and a girl of unusual good sense. She was, writes another cousin, Johnson G. Green, 'the most intellectual woman I ever saw.' She belonged to an excellent family in Kentucky, her father being a man of substance and standing in his community.[1] Mary had been well brought up and given a good education. Acquaintances relate that she was handsome rather than pretty, with dark blue eyes, black hair, and of generous figure — 'portly,' as one observer describes her. She dressed better than most young women in New Salem.[2] Lincoln met her at the Abell cabin, and, thereafter, called upon her several times But if there was any love-making, nothing came of it. At least there is no evidence of an engagement until her next visit, some three years afterward.

At the time of Miss Owens' first visit, Lincoln was boarding at the tavern kept by James Rutledge who, as we have seen, gave up the inn soon after Lincoln came and took his family to a farm owned by John McNamar. The Rutledge tavern was a log house with two rooms of medium size below and two above in a kind of half-loft. There were eleven persons in the Rutledge family, nine of them children.[3] The third of these was a girl, Ann, who, when Lincoln boarded at the inn, was twenty years of age.

The picture of Ann Rutledge is clear and vivid. She was about five feet two inches tall, plump rather than slender, her weight, as reported by friends, being from one hundred and twenty to

[1] J. G. Green's statement. Weik MSS.

[2] Graham's second statement, no date. Weik MSS. Graham says that Miss Owens was extremely good natured, 'very intellectual,' and that mirthfulness was the predominant element in her disposition. His description of her physically is as given in the text, except that he says her eyes were black, her face symmetrical but 'roundish' and that she had 'beautiful even teeth.'

Green describes her as having dark blue eyes, brown hair, light complexion and weighing one hundred and sixty pounds. J. G. Green's statement. Weik MSS.

[3] Jane O., born Nov. 23, 1808; John Miller, born Nov. 29, 1810; Ann Mayes, Jan. 17, 1813 — all in Kentucky; David Ham, Aug. 15, 1817; Robert Brannon, Feb. 23, 1819; Nancy Cameron, Feb. 10, 1821; Margaret Armstrong, June 21, 1823 — all in White Co., Ill.; William Blackburn, Nov. 28, 1826; (Mary Anderson, born June 5, died July 25, 1827); and Sarah F., Oct. 20, 1829 — all in New Salem. Rutledge Memoirs: Hamand, 52.

one hundred and thirty pounds. Her hair was so light that some observers called it golden. She had large, blue eyes, rosy but delicate complexion, and very red lips. Her disposition was sweet and friendly and her brother declares that she was 'the brightest mind of the family,' although she had only a moderate education. She dressed simply, but 'exceedingly neat' though she 'was poor.' [1] She was a notably good housekeeper, too, an important accomplishment, when we consider that the numerous Rutledge family and several boarders ate and some of the latter, Lincoln among them, slept in the not over-large log house.[2] Ann was in charge of the tavern, it seems, her mother having gone to Sand Ridge to keep house for a young farmer, then unmarried, by the name of James Short.[3]

Ann appears to have been the most attractive girl in New Salem and was courted by the two most prominent and prosperous young men of the village, Samuel Hill and John McNamar. McNamar was her favorite and she became engaged to the thrifty young financier with whom, it would appear, she was very much in love.[4] Lincoln, too, 'had great partialities' for her, but McNamar stood in his way.[5] More than thirty years later McNamar said that, for the reasons which follow, 'I think

[1] Mrs. Hardin Bale in Herndon, I, 131.

Mentor Graham describes her as having blue eyes, fair complexion, auburn hair, round face, good teeth, beautiful mouth, medium chin. She was vigorous, amiable, kind, and a 'tolerably good schollar in all the common branches.' Everybody loved her and she loved everybody. Graham's statement. Weik MSS.

She had 'light hair and blue eyes.' R. B. Rutledge to Herndon, no date, but in 1866. Weik MSS.

John McNamar says that 'Miss Ann was a gentle Amiable Maiden without any of the airs of your city Belles but winsome and comly withal a blond in complection with golden hair cherry red Lips and a bonny Blue Eye.' John McNamar to G. U. Miles, May 5, 1865. Weik MSS.

See also Onstot, 22; Short to Herndon, July 7, 1865. Weik MSS.

[2] *Ib.* There were no cooking or other stoves, the entire equipment being a 'flat oven,' a long-handled skillet and a teakettle. The food was chiefly meat fried over the coals in the skillet, corn dodgers baked in the flat oven, and lye hominy. Meat was often fried in the same skillet in which corn dodgers were baked. The best furnished kitchens sometimes had a coffee pot also. 'Sugar was unknown except where the sugar trees abounded.' Onstot, 219–20; Miller, 214–5.

[3] Short to Herndon, July 7, 1865. Weik MSS.

[4] R. B. Rutledge to Herndon, Nov. 21, 1866; William McNeely to same, Nov. 12, 1866; and B. F. Irwin to same, Aug. 27, 1866. Weik MSS.

[5] Duncan's statement. Weik MSS.

Neither Mr. Lincon nor myself were in a situation [1832–35] to enter into what Mr. Seward would call "Entangling Alliances."' [1]

McNamar and Lincoln were friends and the young merchant did not know that Lincoln was 'paying any particular attention to any of the Young Ladies of my acquaintance,' [2] as, indeed, he was not at that time. On her part, Ann was not then 'favorably impressed' with Lincoln, who was 'young poor and awkward' and without prospects, while both Hill and McNamar were 'up in the world.' [3]

McNamar came of a good family in the State of New York and was well educated.[4] When still a young man, McNamar's father lost his property and became heavily involved in debt. Saying nothing of his purposes, John left home for the Western country resolved to make enough money to pay his father's debts,[5] return to New York and bring the family to a new home.[6] At Cincinnati, he and Samuel Hill bought a stock of goods, shipped them to St. Louis, 'whence,' says McNamar, 'I set out on a voyage of Discovery on the praries of Illinois.' [7]

As the place to make his fortune, he quickly chose New Salem, arriving there in 1830, the year before Lincoln came, and, in order that his parents or relatives should not follow or interrupt him, he took the name of John McNiel by which he was known locally. McNamar, says the brother of Ann Rutledge, left home 'clandestinely, and in order to avoid pursuit by his parents, changed his name. His conduct was strictly high-toned, honest and moral.' [8] By sagacity and sharp attention, he soon accumulated property. He dealt in land, acquired a farm, was a partner in Hill's store, the only prosperous one in the vil-

[1] McNamar to Herndon, June 4, 1866. Weik MSS.

[2] McNamar to Miles, May 5, 1866. Weik MSS.

[3] B. F. Irwin to Herndon, Sept. 22, 1866, from inquiries made by Irwin of acquaintances and friends of Lincoln and Ann Rutledge. Weik MSS.

[4] *Lincoln and New Salem*, 48–50.

[5] R. B. Rutledge to Herndon, no date. Also McNamar to Miles, May 5, 1866. Weik MSS. 'my coming west being principally to obtain the means.'

[6] *Lincoln and New Salem*, 49–50.

[7] McNamar to Herndon, June 4, 1866. Weik MSS. McNamar claimed to be the discoverer of New Salem 'as a business point.' *Ib.*

[8] Rutledge to Herndon, no date. Weik MSS.

lage or country roundabout. Alert, diligent, reserved, John McNamar went quietly about his affairs, with steadily increasing success.

About the time that Lincoln went to board at the Rutledge tavern where McNamar also lived, the young business man had reached the mark to which he steadily had worked and was worth, in cash and property, some thousands of dollars.[1] At once he took the next step in his plan of returning to New York, paying off his father's debts and bringing his family to New Salem, after which he would marry Ann Rutledge. He told Ann of his plans, change of name and the reasons for it; [2] and then, in the summer of 1832,[3] started upon his eastward journey. They had agreed to be married on his return. Seemingly as a family arrangement, McNamar on July 26 of the previous year had bought half of Rutledge's eighty-acre farm, paying for the forty acres the sum of fifty dollars.[4] To this farm James Rutledge took his family about the time his prospective son-in-law departed for New York.[5]

So off across the prairies of Illinois and into the forests of Indiana and Ohio, rode John McNamar on 'Old Andy,' a horse that had been ridden by a New Salem volunteer in the Black Hawk disturbance. In Ohio he fell sick of fever and, for several weeks, was dangerously ill, part of the time delirious. When he re-

[1] *Lincoln and New Salem*, 49; Herndon, I, 132.

[2] R. B. Rutledge to Herndon, no date. Weik MSS.

[3] McNamar to Geo. U. Miles, May 5, 1866. Weik MSS.

[4] Transcript Record A, 183, Menard Co., Ill. The acknowledgment of this deed was before Bowling Green, J. P.

On February 8, 1828, James Rutledge entered the E. half S.W. quarter, Sect. 7, N. Range 7 W. in Sangamon County. General Land Office Records, Interior Dept. It was half of this that McNamar bought.

[5] R. B. Rutledge to Herndon, Nov. 21, 1866. Weik MSS.; John McNamar to Herndon, June 4, 1866; and Mrs. Bowling Green's statement in Miles to Herndon, March 23, 1866. Weik MSS.

McNamar's farm, which he had bought from Cameron, the partner of Rutledge, adjoined Rutledge's farm of which McNamar had bought half. On Jan. 20, 1833, James Rutledge and wife sold the remaining forty acres of his farm to John Jones, for $300. Transcript Record A, page 239, Menard Co., Ill. So that when Ann and her father died, James Rutledge owned no real estate. The entire eighty acres, entered by him in 1828, is rather poor farming land, and is now estimated by the present owner at $100 the acre. I am indebted for this data to G. E. Nelson, of Petersburg, Ill.

Lincoln had surveyed both farms. McNamar to Herndon, June 4, 1866. Weik MSS.

covered, he went on to New York, where he found his father very feeble and the financial condition of the family worse than ever.[1] He had written Ann of his illness and delay from Ohio and again from New York and she had answered his letters.[2] But mails were then slow, uncertain and expensive,[3] McNamar was harried by his father's creditors, worried by his father's declining health; gradually the correspondence seems to have languished and finally to have ceased. McNamar did not come back at once, as he had expected to do; 'perhaps,' writes Ann's brother, 'circumstances of the family prevented his immediate return.' McNamar's father died, the young man, in time, straightened out the tangled affairs of his family, paid the old debts and prepared to leave for New Salem and Ann Rutledge.[4]

Troubled that letters from her betrothed no longer came, Ann told her parents of McNamar's change of name. Suspicion instantly sprang up and quickly possessed the Rutledge family. Rumor of the circumstances soon ran from cabin to cabin in the little hamlet; gossip made the worst of the situation. McNamar must be a bad person, perhaps an escaped criminal, doubtless he had another wife.[5] In any case, Ann had been abandoned. Incessantly such talk fell upon the girl's ears; everybody pitied her, condemned the faithless lover. Ann became despondent and distracted.

So stood matters when Lincoln, through whose hands her correspondence with McNamar had passed,[6] began his courtship, the nature and course of which are misty. No positive and definite engagement resulted, although it seems that there was a tentative agreement to marry, 'conditional,' however, asserts Ann's brother, 'to an honorable release from the contract with McNamar.' Indeed, when urged by her younger brother, David, to marry Lincoln, Ann refused until she could see McNamar

[1] R. B. Rutledge to Herndon, no date. Weik MSS.

[2] Statement of Mrs. William Rutledge in Miles to Herndon, March 23, 1866. Weik MSS.

[3] In 1835 it cost twenty-five cents to send a letter from Chicago to New York, by the quickest and cheapest route. Wentworth, Fergus, 7, 27.

[4] R. B. Rutledge to Herndon, no date. Weik MSS.

[5] *Lincoln and New Salem*, 50–2. [6] *Ib.*, 50.

again and 'inform him of the change.' [1] On Lincoln's part marriage was not to take place until Abraham had finished his study of the law and established himself in the practice of it.[2]

Neither Ann nor Abraham, it would seem, displayed any precipitancy of passion. James Short, who lived within half a mile of McNamar's farm while the Rutledge family lived there and whom Lincoln 'came to see . . . every day or two,' knew nothing of love-making, much less of an engagement.[3] Thus the affair wore on until the summer of 1835, when Ann Rutledge had 'brain fever.' [4] She grew steadily worse and, realizing that she would die, asked to see Lincoln and her brother David, then a student in Illinois College at Jacksonville [5] which had been established not long before. On August 25, she died in the farmhouse of her absent lover, and there, too, three months later, her father, James Rutledge, died of the same disease.[6]

Soon afterward, into New Salem drove John McNamar, his mother, brothers, and sisters in the wagon with him, the young man expecting to claim his bride, as he had planned to do.[7]

When Lincoln came from the bedside of the dying girl, observers noted that he was despondent and, when she died, he appeared gloomy and dejected. Again, in the village, 'old people' wagged their heads, and said that he was mentally unbalanced, this time because of sorrow.[8] 'But various opinions obtained as

[1] R. B. Rutledge to Herndon, no date. Weik MSS. Lincoln told Graham that they were engaged and Ann 'intimated' the same thing to him. Graham's statement. Weik MSS.

[2] R. B. Rutledge to Herndon, Nov. 21, 1866. Weik MSS.

[3] Short to Herndon, July 7, 1865. Weik MSS.

[4] R. B. Rutledge to Herndon, Nov. 21, 1866. Weik MSS. The term was applied to cases of typhoid fever.

[5] A. M. Prewitt, grandson of Jane Rutledge, to J. E. Hamand, Nov. 7, 1921. Hamand, 19.

Lincoln had entered into a bond with David Rutledge and William Green, January 31, 1833, for $150, the proceeds of which are supposed to have enabled the two younger men to enter Illinois College. In August suit was brought against the three. *Litigant:* Townsend, 55.

[6] Dec. 3, 1835, when fifty-four years of age. R. B. Rutledge's statement. Weik MSS.

[7] Herndon, I, 141.

[8] McNeely to Herndon, Nov. 12, 1866; Mrs. Bowling Green's statement in Miles to Herndon, March 23, 1866; B. F. Irwin to same, Aug. 27, and Sept. 22, 1866, and John Jones's statement attached to Rutledge to Herndon, no date, but 1866.

'Mother remembers . . . how sad his face was when he came out of the room where Ann lay dying.' A. M. Prewitt to J. E. Hamand, Nov. 7, 1921. Hamand, 19.

Mentor Graham says that Lincoln told him that he felt like committing suicide;

to the cause of his change, some thought it was an increased application to his *Law studies*, others that it was deep anguish of Soul (as he was all soul) over the Loss of Miss R.' [1] He must have shown distress, for James Short concluded that Lincoln's melancholy was due to love or an engagement, although he had heard of neither.[2] It was said in after years, that Lincoln refused to eat because of the death of Ann Rutledge, but Short flatly denies this story.[3] However, the effect on Lincoln of Ann's death, says her brother, was 'terrible' and because of it friends feared that he would become insane.[4]

Bowling Green, who lived about a mile from New Salem, took Lincoln to his cabin, where, in a fortnight, the care of Mrs. Green restored the sufferer. Mrs. Green's opinion was that Ann 'thought . . . as much of [McNamar] as she did of Lincoln to appearances.' [5] The wife of William Rutledge, one of Ann's brothers, went further and declared that if she 'had lived [she] would have married McNamar or rather . . . that . . . Ann liked him a little the best though McNamar had ben absent . . . for Near two years at the time of her death.' [6]

Lincoln came back to his study and surveying, boarding at the tavern, now kept by Henry Onstot. He talked to McNamar for whom he wrote a deed and who 'thought that he had lost some of his former vivacity.' [7] Neither then nor ever afterward did he show unfriendliness to his rival.[8] It would appear, indeed, that nobody told McNamar of a love affair between Lincoln and Ann. 'I never heard any person say that Mr. Lincoln

but Graham assured Lincoln that 'God's higher purpose' was working and Lincoln told Graham that he, too, 'thought so somehow — couldn't tell how.' Graham's statement, no date. Weik MSS.

[1] Henry McHenry in B. F. Farley to Herndon, Jan. 8, 1866. Weik MSS.

[2] Short to Herndon, July 7, 1865. Weik MSS.

[3] 'James Short "says it is not so about Lincolns Refusing to Eat on the account of the death of Miss Rutledge."' Caleb Carman to Herndon, Nov. 30, 1866. Weik MSS.

[4] R. B. Rutledge to Herndon, no date. Weik MSS.

[5] Mrs. Green's statement in George U. Miles to Herndon, March 23, 1866. Weik MSS.

[6] Statement of Mrs. William Rutledge in Miles to Herndon, March 23, 1866. Weik MSS.

[7] McNamar to Miles, May 5, 1866. Weik MSS.

[8] Twenty-three years after, in the Douglas campaign, Lincoln greeted McNamar 'cordially,' calling him by name. McNamar to Herndon, June 4, 1866. Weik MSS.

addressed Miss Ann Rutledge in terms of courtship neither her own family nor my acquaintances otherwise. I heard simply,' continues McNamar, 'from two prominent Gentlemen of my acquaintance and Personal friends that Mr. Lincoln was Grieved very much at her death.' [1]

A few months later, in 1836, Lincoln became a candidate to succeed himself in the Legislature. A President was to be elected; Van Buren was the Democratic candidate, the Whigs of the West and Southwest supported Senator Hugh L. White of Tennessee.[2] This time there was no fusion with the Democrats and Lincoln again published a statement of his political opinions. A piece in the *Sangamo Journal*, signed 'Many Voters,' demanded that all candidates for the Legislature 'show their hands.' 'Agreed,' wrote Lincoln to that newspaper. 'Here's mine. I go for all sharing the privileges of the government who assist in bearing its burdens;' so he favors the suffrage for 'all whites . . . who pay taxes or bear arms (by no means excluding females).'

If elected Lincoln will serve all the people, he says, 'as well those that oppose as those that support me.' He will be 'governed by their will,' when he knows what their will is; otherwise 'I shall do what my own judgment teaches me will best advance their interests.' On one issue he is positive: 'whether elected or not,' he favors 'distributing the proceeds of the sales of the public lands to the several States, to enable our State . . . to dig canals and construct railroads without borrowing money and paying the interest on it.' As to the Presidential campaign then in progress, he will vote for Hugh L. White for President.[3]

Some acrimony appears to have crept into this, Lincoln's third campaign. Robert Allen, a Colonel in the Black Hawk

[1] McNamar to Geo. U. Miles, May 5, 1866. Weik MSS.

Arnold in his *Life of Lincoln*, 42–3, says: 'Gossip and imagination have represented this early romance as casting a shadow over his whole after life, and as having produced something bordering upon insanity. The picture has been somewhat too highly colored, and the story made rather too tragic'; and dryly adds: 'In his recollections of her, there was a poetry of sentiment, which might possibly have been lessened had she lived, by the prosaic realities of life.'

[2] Michigan and Arkansas were admitted to the Union in 1836, thus continuing and strengthening the custom of bringing in slave and free states at the same time.

[3] *Works*, I, 14–5. June 13, 1836.

War, started a report, damaging to Lincoln and a fellow candidate, Ninian W. Edwards of Springfield, one of the leaders of the little aristocracy of that town, whose sister-in-law Lincoln was to marry before long. When passing through New Salem, Colonel Allen had said that he knew facts which, if made public, would destroy the chances for election of Lincoln and Edwards, but that, for friendship's sake, Allen would not tell what he knew.

Lincoln instantly wrote Allen demanding that he make public any facts derogatory to Edwards or himself. If Lincoln has done anything to forfeit the confidence of the people, 'he that knows of that thing, and conceals it, is a traitor to his country's interest.' Since 'the public interest' is supreme, 'let the worst come.' But no matter how bad it may be, or 'however low it may sink me,' the revelation 'shall never break the tie of personal friendship between us.' Lincoln desires an answer and Allen is 'at liberty to publish both' letters.[1]

With this exception, the campaign was like those preceding except that Lincoln made more speeches. The Clary Grove Boys had sounded his praise long and loud and his fame as a speaker had reached Springfield. In the courthouse at the County seat, just before the election, the New Salem candidate made a speech of such 'great power and originality' that it 'produced a profound impression' even at that centre of oratory and learning. 'The crowd was with him,' Lincoln's friends exultant, the opposition dejected. A leading lawyer, George Forquer,[2] 'one of the champions of the former Republican party,' had recently become a Democrat and, 'almost simultaneous[ly],' received, from President Jackson, the appointment of Register of the Land Office. He had a fine new house; 'the best then in Springfield,' equipped with a lightning rod, the only one in town. Lincoln had made particular note of this device, since it was the first lightning rod he had ever seen.

Forquer answered Lincoln's speech, and at the beginning said that 'the young man would have to be taken down.' When the Democratic office-holder finished, Lincoln replied. At the close

[1] *Works*, I, 15–6. June 21, 1836.

[2] Who had filed the suit against Lincoln in 1833, p. 119 *n.*, *supra*.

of his remarks, Lincoln, turning to Forquer, made mention of Forquer's opening about taking him down, and, quickly facing the crowd exclaimed: 'It is for you not for me to say whether I am up or down! The gentleman has alluded to my being a young man. I am older in years than I am in the tricks and trades of politicians. I desire to live, and I desire place and distinction as a politician. But I would rather die now than, like the gentleman, live to see the day that I would have to erect a lightning rod to protect a guilty conscience from an offended God.' Lincoln's followers shouted in triumph and declared that his speech was the greatest ever made in Springfield. 'I have heard him often since in court and before the people,' relates the teller of this story, 'but never saw him appear so well as on that occasion.' [1]

When the campaign was over and the votes registered, Lincoln was again elected, and he led the ticket as he had not done two years before when running as a bi-partisan candidate, and his legislative career continued.[2] He was now firmly established, politically, in Sangamon County and his power and influence were steadily and rapidly growing.

In the midst of these rising fortunes, Mary Owens paid another visit to her sister, Mrs. Bennett Abell. The Abell cabin was only a mile from New Salem [3] and Lincoln often went to see her.[4] He afterward said that he had promised Mrs. Abell to marry her sister, but repented his 'rashness.' The matter is sadly confused, although those on the ground believed that 'Mr. Lincoln again fell in love.' Observers were sharply watching, for Ann Rutledge had been in her grave but a few months, and Mary Owens, 'dressed much finer than any lady who lived about New Salem,' attracted notice. She even had a 'fashionable silk dress' which the village thought 'in striking contrast with the calico dress . . . that Ann had worn.' [5]

[1] Narrative of Joshua F. Speed, no date. Weik MSS.

[2] He received 1716 votes, and the six other successful candidates ranked as follows: William F. Elkin, 1694; Ninian W. Edwards, 1659; John Dawson, 1641; Daniel Stone, 1438; Robert L. Wilson, 1353; Andrew McCormick, 1306. Pease, 299.

[3] Johnson G. Green's statement. no date. Weik MSS.

[4] Mrs. Bowling Green in Miles to Herndon, March 23, 1866. Weik MSS.

[5] Onstot, 24.

At any rate the talk spread from cabin to cabin that Lincoln and Miss Owens were engaged. After her first visit he had boasted that 'if ever that girl comes back to New Salem I am going to marry her.' [1] But there was much sparring, and the lack of harmony between them steadily grew. Once Lincoln was away on a surveying trip, near McNamar's farm where the Rutledges were then living, and Miss Owens seems to have resented his failing to call upon her during that time; and Lincoln was equally offended, when, upon his return, Mary did not eagerly welcome him.[2] The village gossips had a story that when Abe and Mary were going with Mrs. Bowling Green to her cabin, Mrs. Green, who was carrying a very fat baby, had a hard time climbing a hill with the heavy child in her arms; and when Lincoln took no notice of it, Miss Owens laughingly said to him: 'You would not make a good husband, Abe.' [3] This tale she denied thirty years afterward.[4] Some young men and women, Lincoln and Mary among them, went on horseback to a party at Bowling Green's. When crossing a deep stream the other girls were carefully assisted by their escorts, but Lincoln rode across leaving Miss Owens without any attention; and, when she made mention of the neglect, told her with a laugh, that he knew she could take care of herself.[5] In such fashion ran this strange courtship.

Lincoln's state of mind is best expressed in letters to Miss Owens, and in a remarkable explanation of them made to Mrs. O. H. Browning. Since this is Lincoln's only love affair of which there is documentary evidence written by himself, and in view of his comments upon it then, and his version of the origin of the entanglement, these letters require particular attention. From Vandalia, where he was attending the Legislature, he wrote 'Mary' the gloomiest letter imaginable; he is sick and blue, he says, and wants her to cheer him up. His letter is 'dull and stupid,' he adds — as, indeed, it was. From the matrimonial

[1] Onstot, 24.

[2] Mrs. Bowling Green in Miles to Herndon, March 23, 1866; J. G. Green's statement, no date. Weik MSS.

[3] Johnson G. Green's statement. Weik MSS.

[4] Mary S. Vineyard (née Owens) to Herndon, July 22, 1866. Herndon, I, 149–50.

[5] *Ib.*

point of view, about which, however, he says nothing, the letter is most discouraging.[1]

Again Lincoln wrote 'Friend Mary' from Springfield, where, as we shall presently see, he had gone to live, a disconsolate letter. She would never like it there, no woman speaks to him, he has not gone to church and shall not because he would not know how to behave himself, he would be happier with her, but not if she would be discontented; he will 'most positively abide by' what he has said to her provided she wishes it, but Mary 'had better not do it.'[2]

Still he went out to New Salem to see the young woman, and immediately after one such visit — 'the same day on which we parted' — once more wrote her in terms still more depressing. He wants, says Lincoln, 'in all cases to do right, and most particularly so in all cases with women;' he would let Mary alone if he 'knew it would be doing right;' he 'rather suspect[s] that course is best' and she can 'drop the subject . . . forever . . . without calling forth one accusing murmur' from him. In short Lincoln will 'release' her if she desires, although he is willing and even anxious to bind her 'faster.' He is thinking only of her happiness, upon which his own depends; so if she does not answer, then 'farewell. A long life and a merry one attend you.'[3]

Then Lincoln, in writing, confides the whole affair to another woman, wife of O. H. Browning, who, years afterwards, was to play so important a rôle in Lincoln's career. He had formed the acquaintance of Mrs. Browning at Vandalia when attending the Legislature and she was, perhaps, the first woman of social position and political importance he had ever met. At all events he lays bare his heart to her, with jubilant and quizzical, albeit inept, pen.

Lincoln tells Mrs. Browning — 'between you and me' — that it was Miss Owens' sister, Mrs. Bennett Abell, who had trapped him; that she had 'proposed to' him that she would bring Mary back from Kentucky where Mrs. Abell was going on a visit, if he

[1] Lincoln to Mary Owens, Dec. 13, 1836. *Works*, I, 17–8.

[2] Same to same, May 7, 1837. *Ib.*, 52–4.

[3] Lincoln to Mary Owens, Aug. 16, 1837. *Works*, I, 55–7.

would marry the girl forthwith; and that Lincoln 'accepted the proposal.' How could he 'have done otherwise'? Besides, he was then 'most confoundedly well pleased with the project.' Why not? He 'had seen the said sister some three years before,' and thought it all right to go 'plodding through life hand in hand with her.'

So 'sure enough,' says Lincoln, when Mrs. Abell returned, she brought Mary with her. This puzzled Lincoln — it showed that 'she was a trifle too willing.' But when he saw Miss Owens! 'I knew she was oversize, but now she appeared a fair match for Falstaff.' No wonder she had been called an 'old maid.' Nobody could have 'reached her present bulk in less than thirty-five or forty years.' Then too she made Lincoln think of his mother, 'not from withered features — for her skin was too full of fat to permit of its contracting into wrinkles — but from her want of teeth, weather-beaten appearance in general.'

Lincoln explains to Mrs. Browning that, 'fairly convinced that no other man on earth would have her,' he resolved to 'stick to my word,' since to do so is, with him, 'a point of honor and conscience in all things.' He taught himself to think of Mary as his wife and searched for 'perfections in her which might be fairly set off against her defects.' At Vandalia he received letters from her, which confirmed his suspicions; and although 'fixed "firm as the surge-repelling rock" in my resolution,' he was 'continually repenting the rashness which had led me to make it.' Never in his life, he says, did he so much wish to be free from the 'thraldom' of any 'bondage, either real or imaginary.' He planned how he 'might get along in life after' marriage and how he 'might procrastinate the evil day . . . which I really dreaded as much, perhaps more, than an Irishman does the halter.'

And here he is, at last, 'wholly, unexpectedly, completely out of the "scrape,"' without 'violation of word, honor, or conscience!' Miraculous! How does Mrs. Browning think he managed to escape? She never can guess, so Lincoln will tell her. 'I mustered my resolution and made the proposal to her direct; but, shocking to relate, she answered, No.' Again he made the attempt, again Mary 'repelled it with greater firm-

ness than before.' He tried it again and again with the same result.

So, 'vanity deeply wounded' and 'mortified almost beyond endurance,' he gave up. But alas! 'I then for the first time began to suspect that I was really a little in love with her. But let it all go! I'll try and outlive it. Others have been made fools of by the girls, but this can never with truth be said of me. I most emphatically, in this instance, made a fool of myself. I have now come to the conclusion never again to think of marrying, and for this reason — I can never be satisfied with any one who would be blockhead enough to have me.'

Lincoln needs distraction, it appears; when Mrs. Browning gets his letter she must write him 'a long yarn about something to amuse' him.[1]

This epistle, written in his twenty-ninth year, requires much comment or none. Even after the affair had thus ended, Lincoln told Mrs. Abell, whom he saw in Springfield one day, to 'tell your sister that I think she was a great fool because she did not stay here and marry me.' [2]

Twenty-eight years afterwards, Mary Owens, who soon married happily and well, gave Herndon her account, although reluctantly and as the result of much urging. She had never heard, of course, of Lincoln's revelation to Mrs. Browning, nor does it appear that his version had ever crept into the gossip of New Salem. But Herndon by tenacious enquiry had learned fragments of the facts and she felt, therefore, that the whole of them should be stated. She writes frankly, yet with dignity and reserve.

Referring to the report that she rebuffed Lincoln because of his boast that he would marry her if she ever again came to Illinois, Mrs. Vineyard writes that this is untrue. She did say to her sister, 'who was very anxious for us to be married,' that she 'thought Mr. Lincoln was deficient in those little links which make up the chain of woman's happiness — at least it was so in my case.' Yet she did not attribute this deficiency to 'lack of goodness of heart,' but to 'his training' which had been 'dif-

[1] Lincoln to Mrs. O. H. Browning, April 1, 1838. *Works*, I, 87–92.

[2] Mary S. Vineyard to Herndon, July 22, 1866. Herndon, I, 149–50.

ferent' from hers, so that 'there was not that congeniality which would otherwise have existed.' His letters to her showed that 'his heart and hand were at my disposal,' but she did not care enough 'to have the matter consummated.' When she left Illinois in 1838 her acquaintance and correspondence with Lincoln 'ceased without ever again being renewed.' [1]

No longer encumbered by the 'thraldom' of Miss Owens, Lincoln, with unburdened mind, could now practise law, which mildly interested him, mingle in the society of Springfield, which puzzled and attracted him, and, best of all, engage in politics, which fascinated and absorbed him. With the life of the Hankses, the Lincolns, and the Halls far behind him, out of New Salem which expired almost the moment he left it, free from sentimental ties with rural maidens, with even the Clary Grove Boys, now grown older and settled, only a fond but fast vanishing memory, Lincoln rapidly emerges upon his public career. Soon he is to move forward, sometimes halted by political misfortune, sometimes weighed down by domestic troubles, but onward in spite of all, and, on the whole, with ever increasing speed. Upon this journey, where the personal grows ever smaller and the public element ever larger, we shall now accompany Lincoln, taking as the first point of departure the Legislature at Vandalia.

[1] Mary S. Vineyard to Herndon, May 22, 1866. Herndon, I, 148.

CHAPTER IV

LEGISLATURE AND SPRINGFIELD

I am opposed to encouraging that lawless and mobocratic spirit . . . which is already abroad in the land. LINCOLN.

UPON the west bluff of the Kaskaskia River, sixty feet above high water, stood in 1834, perhaps a hundred buildings. All but two were of wood, some of them frame structures, but most of them log cabins. A little frame Presbyterian church house, without a steeple, nestled on a side street, while a still smaller building served for all other religious denominations as well as for school purposes and public gatherings. A comparatively large Methodist church was in process of construction.[1] Five or six of the bigger houses were taverns or boarding places, two of them would accommodate thirty or forty persons, though they were not entirely finished.[2] A watch and clock mender had a shop,[3] and three or four stores and groceries, the latter heavily stocked with all kinds of liquors,[4] supplied the wants of the town and countryside. A jail had just been finished.

[1] It was forty feet square and sixteen feet high. *Illinois Advocate*, Vandalia, Aug. 24, 1833.

The full title of this newspaper was at this time the *Illinois Advocate and State Register*. On April 15, 1835, it became the *Illinois Advocate* and so continued until March 8, 1836, when for about three months it was the *Illinois State Register and Illinois Advocate*. On June 24, 1836, it appeared as the *Illinois State Register and People's Advocate*, a name it retained until its removal in August, 1839, to the new capital, Springfield, where it dropped half its name and was from that time the *Illinois State Register*. The shorter titles — *Illinois Advocate* and *Illinois State Register* — are used in these notes.

[2] Carter's tavern was forty-four feet long by forty feet wide. *Ib.*, Feb. 9, 1833.

The National Hotel advertised a fine table and 'choicest wines and wholesome liquors.' *Ib.*, March 15, 1834.

'The House of Entertainment at the Sign of the Green Tree' assured customers that its 'Bar will be furnished with the choicest liquors of every kind.' *Ib.*, Dec. 16, 1835.

One tavern was called the 'New White House.' *Ib.*, Jan. 14, 1834.

The Vandalia Inn advertised that its dining room was forty-four by twenty feet and that it had thirteen bed-rooms. *Ib.*, Sept. 24, 1834.

[3] *Ib.*, Jan. 14, 1834.

[4] One of these advertised 'Groceries of all kinds, the most choice Liquors such as the best French Brandy, Holland Gin, Whisky, wines, etc.' *Ib.*, Feb. 4, 1835.

The most pretentious structure in the place was a brick building of two stories, in which met the General Assembly of Illinois when in session, members of the House in the lower story and those of the Senate in the upper story. On a street near by, a smaller brick building originally meant for a bank, was divided into a few rooms occupied by public officials. Two weekly newspapers, one Democratic and the other Whig, were published; and there was a school for 'Lads and Young Gentlemen.' [1]

About eight hundred people, including children, lived in the town [2] and the adjacent country was scantily settled; but marriages were frequent.[3] For the most part the surrounding land was heavily timbered, but to the north and west rolling prairies stretched into the horizon. The river bottoms were covered thickly with great trees, vines and all manner of rank vegetation; and from this valley came at the seasonable time clouds of mosquitoes.[4]

The streets of the village were eighty feet in width, deep with mud or dust according to the weather. There were no sidewalks. Two main roads ran through the place, one the National Road, scarcely opened as yet in this section,[5] from Washington seven hundred and eighty-one miles distant to St. Louis eighty-two miles to the southwest. Mails from Philadelphia and other Eastern cities were between two and three weeks on the way.[6]

[1] *The Illinois Advocate and State Register* and *The Vandalia Whig and Illinois Intelligencer.*

'Orthography, History, Rhetoric, Natural philosophy, Bookkeeping and Surveying,' as well as reading, writing, grammar, geography, and arithmetic were taught. *Illinois Advocate,* Sept. 14, 1833.

[2] *Illinois in 1837:* S. A. Mitchell, 129–30, states that the population of Vandalia was 850; but in *An Accompaniment to Mitchell's Map* published in 1838, 221, the population is given as 500; and *The Geographical Catechism:* Daniel Rupp, I, 357, says 750.

[3] In a single issue of the *Illinois Advocate* five marriage notices appeared, of one of which the editor observes: 'another of our young men has . . . stepped into the sea of connubial bliss, to be wafted by the gentle gales of domestic felicity, safely over the storms of life. . . . Let us go and do likewise.' *Illinois Advocate,* Dec. 7, 1833; Aug. 24 and Oct. 12, 1833.

[4] 'Bilious fever prevailed here. . . . There is a very extensive morass on the river bottom opposite the town . . . Vandalia cannot be a healthy place with this dismal swamp on the one side, and some very low wet prairies on the other.' *Eight Months in Illinois:* William Oliver, 99–100.

[5] 'This road is nothing more than a track.' *Ib.,* 99–100.

[6] This was especially true in the months of winter. The *Illinois Advocate* in January,

Another road, even more important at that time, led from Tennessee and Kentucky and traversed the whole of Illinois from the southeast to the northwest corners of the State. This thoroughfare passed through Springfield.[1]

Such was Vandalia [2] when on a winter day late in November, 1834, the regular stage coach was driven into the capital of Illinois. Among the passengers was Abraham Lincoln, one of the newly elected representatives from Sangamon County.[3]

He wore a new suit which, made by a tailor in Springfield, had cost him sixty dollars. Lincoln had borrowed from Coleman Smoot two hundred dollars in order properly to equip himself and pay his expenses while away from New Salem on his first legislative adventure. The loan was, whimsically declared Lincoln, when asking Smoot for the money, a kind of penalty upon Smoot for having voted for him.[4] He was better attired and had more clothes than ever before in his life.

It is reasonable to suppose that, upon this his initial journey to the capital as a legislator, Lincoln accompanied John T. Stuart and other members of the Sangamon delegation, and that he put up at the same tavern where they boarded. Soon the little town was thronged with law-makers, attorneys in attendance upon the Supreme Court of the State, and, more numerous than all, those who wished the Legislature to adopt various schemes. The gathering was 'unusually large.' [5] The flow of whisky swelled in proportion to the increase of the tem-

1834, reported on the 23d that its 'latest dates from Washington are only of the 7th,' and the interval might extend to seven weeks — Dec. 11 to Feb. 1 — as happened in the winter of 1833–4. *Ib.*, Feb. 1, 1834.

[1] On Tanner's map of Illinois and Missouri, 1827, this road starts at Shawneetown and runs through Mount Vernon, Washington, Edwardsville, Springfield, and Peoria to Chicago on Lake Michigan.

[2] For descriptions of Vandalia in 1834 see *Historical Souvenir of Vandalia:* R. W. Ross, 11–9; *Illinois Monthly Magazine*, II, 172–6 (Jan. 1832); Mitchell, 129–30; Oliver, 99–100; *Three Years in North America:* James Stuart, II, 397–408; *Illinois Advocate*, Oct. 29, 1834.

The site of Vandalia was selected by a commission appointed under the Act of March 30, 1819, as the place for the capital of the new state until 1840. The name was probably reminiscent of the Vandalia Land Company of 1769.

[3] The stage left Springfield at six o'clock every Thursday morning and arrived in Vandalia at two P.M. Friday. *Illinois Advocate*, Feb. 23, 1833; Herndon, I, 162.

[4] Smoot to Herndon, May 7, 1866. Weik MSS.

[5] The *Illinois Advocate*, Dec. 3, 1834.

porary sojourners in Vandalia and the popping of corks drawn from bottles was a familiar sound at candle-light. Lincoln found himself in a busy, joyous company, buoyant with the confidence of hope, thrilling with great projects and eager expectations.

During sessions of the Legislature, Vandalia was also the social centre of Illinois. The fashion and beauty of the State assembled at the capital at such times; wives of opulent members accompanied their husbands, and dancing and social gaiety enlivened the little town. Small and crude as Vandalia was, life there when the General Assembly met was in brilliant contrast with that of New Salem. All was planned and, as far as possible, conducted — manners, deportment, and dress — on the pattern of the capitals of the older states. More interesting still, and of first importance in the development of Lincoln's career, men of wealth and enterprise from all over Illinois, and even from other states, gathered at Vandalia during law-making season.

When on Monday, December 1, 1834,[1] Lincoln with his colleagues entered the State House, he found himself in a building, which, although erected but ten years earlier, was not far from the point of collapse. In places the brick walls were bulging, plaster had fallen from the ceiling, and dilapidation was conspicuous and menacing.[2] In his address to the Legislature Lieutenant-Governor William Lee D. Ewing [3] urged reform of the criminal code, that 'sanguinary body of criminal law;' but nothing was done to ameliorate its severity. Slave laws were drastic and cruel; yet nobody so much as suggested their amendment or repeal.[4] Advertisements of runaway slaves appeared frequently in the newspapers. On the third day of the session

[1] *House Journal*, Sess. 1834–5, 4.

[2] The condition of the State House was so bad that Governor Ewing in his message to the Legislature declared that the building 'is manifestly inconvenient for the transaction of public business' and that its 'appearance . . . is not calculated to add either character or credit to the State.' *Ib.*, 17.

The first State House, a frame structure, burned in the winter of 1823. During the following summer the citizens of Vandalia built the brick house described in the text, at a cost of $15,000, all but $3,000 of which was paid by the State. Robert W. Ross, 12–3.

[3] Gov. John Reynolds resigned, Nov. 17, 1834, and Lieutenant-Governor Ewing thus became Governor until the inauguration of Governor-elect Joseph Duncan, Dec. 3. *Ib.*, 8, 24–5.

[4] No negro or mulatto 'held as a slave within this state' shall 'try his right to freedom,

three such advertisements with cuts were printed, giving particular descriptions of the escaping slaves.[1]

At this session Lincoln cast no vote of historical importance. With few exceptions, his name is recorded on calls of ayes and noes with that of John T. Stuart, leader of the Whigs in Sangamon County and, indeed, in the State. Stuart was also a member of the powerful Committee on the Judiciary.[2] As a new member, Lincoln was placed on the unimportant Committee on Public Accounts and Expenditures.[3] During the session he was appointed on two select committees, one to examine a bill to increase the number of election precincts in Morgan County and the other on the duties of the Attorney General.[4] He introduced a bill for a private toll-bridge across Salt Creek in Sangamon County which passed in due course.[5] The room in the State House used by the Council of Revision was not fit for occupancy; but Lincoln and two other members voted against renting a better office.[6]

The disposition of public lands belonging to the United States was a matter of first importance to the people of Illinois and for a number of years the Journals of the House and Senate contain many resolutions upon that subject. Midway in the session of the Legislature of 1834–35, Lincoln tried his hand at a solution of the problem. On January 10, 1835, he offered a resolution: 'that our Senators be instructed, and our Representatives requested, to use their whole influence in the Con-

or be discharged from slavery' by habeas corpus. Act, Jan. 22, 1827. *Revised Laws of Illinois*, 1827, 241. No negro or mulatto could settle in Illinois without a certificate of freedom and unless bond of $1000 was given that such colored person would not become a public charge as a poor person, and would 'demean himself or herself in strict conformity with the laws,' etc. Act, Jan. 17, 1829. 'Every black or mulatto person' without a certificate of freedom was 'deemed a runaway slave' whom anybody could arrest and take before a Justice of the Peace to be handed over to the Sheriff and, upon advertisement, hired out for one year. *Ib.*, 109–11. For an admirable summary of the 'black code,' see Ford, 33–4.

[1] *Illinois Advocate*, Dec. 3, 1834. These advertisements began to appear in large numbers just before Lincoln entered the Legislature. *Ib.*, Jan. 5, June 8, July 27, Aug. 31, Nov. 2, 1833, and March 1, May 3, Sept. 3, 10, 1834; and they continued throughout his entire legislative career. *Ib.*, Jan. 2, 6, 1836, Aug. 11, 14, 25, Sept. 1, 1837, etc. Often two or three slaves were described in a single advertisement.

[2] *House Journal*, Sess. 1834–5, 41. [3] *Ib.*, 42.

[4] *Ib.*, 80, 453. Morgan County adjoined Sangamon.

[5] *Ib.*, 86, 141, 222, 245. [6] *Ib.*, 86.

gress, of the United States, to procure the passage of a law relative to the public lands, by the operation of which the State of Illinois, would be entitled to receive annually, a sum of money not less in amount than twenty per cent upon the amount annually paid into the Treasury of the United States, for public lands lying within the limits of the said State of Illinois.' But the resolution was promptly laid on the table, without roll-call,[1] and Lincoln did not again press it.

In the election of State officers there was much trading, party lines not yet being so rigid as they speedily became. Lincoln supported his friends. Thus he voted for Ninian W. Edwards, a determined Whig, for Attorney General; but upon the resignation of Edwards, Lincoln voted for Jesse B. Thomas, an equally stubborn Democrat.[2] Lincoln voted for John J. Hardin, a fellow Whig, and against Stephen A. Douglas, Democrat, both of Morgan County, for State's Attorney of the First Judicial District; but he voted for William A. Richardson, an aggressive Democrat, and against a staunch and able Whig, O. H. Browning, for State's Attorney for the Fifth Judicial District.[3] Even in the election of a United States Senator, partisanship was not yet strictly observed. While Lincoln voted for Richard M. Young, then Whiggishly inclined, John M. Robinson, a forthright Democrat, was elected to succeed himself.[4]

[1] *House Journal*, Sess. 1834–5, 269. Mention of Lincoln's proposed amendment was made in the *Sangamo Journal* at Springfield, Jan. 24, 1835.

[2] Edwards was elected on the first ballot, receiving thirty-nine votes to thirty-six cast for Jesse B. Thomas, and on the second ballot forty-four to thirty-three for Thomas. *Ib.*, 196–7.

Thomas was elected, receiving fifty-five votes to thirteen for A. P. Dunbar and three for Seth T. Sawyer. *Ib.*, 521, Feb. 10, 1835.

[3] Douglas was elected, receiving thirty-eight votes to thirty-four for Hardin. *Ib.*, 522.

Richardson received fifty-seven votes to eleven for Browning. *Ib.*, 523–4. He was to become the chief lieutenant of Douglas in Congress, while Browning was to develop into one of Lincoln's most trusted agents in the United States Senate.

[4] Robinson, forty-seven, Young, thirty. *House Journal*, 142–3. Examples of Lincoln's other votes are: against a memorial to Congress praying that when public lands were sold they should be made subject to taxation (*ib.*, 69); against extending jurisdiction of Justices of the Peace (*ib.*, 73); for organizing agricultural societies (*ib.*, 101); that the House meet at nine instead of ten o'clock (*ib.*, 144); against making public prosecutors liable for costs in criminal suits not sustained in any court (*ib.*, 163); for the Public Roads Act (*ib.*, 171, 207); for the organization of circuit courts (*ib.*, 184); for election by the people of County Recorders and Surveyors (*ib.*, 129, 283, 284); for incorporation of Jacksonville Female Academy (*ib.*, 307, 326–7); and against making

Such are examples of Lincoln's votes and labors during his first experience as a legislator, such the nature of the business transacted by the General Assembly of Illinois at the session of 1834–35. In the end, an average amount of legislation was enacted. One law was of much importance and weighty influence on Lincoln's approaching career as a lawyer and legislator; of great effect, too, in the development of his economic and political opinions. This was the law, for which Lincoln voted, incorporating a new State Bank to be located at Springfield, an institution of which he was soon to become the stoutest champion and defender.[1] Also the charter of the Bank of Illinois at Shawneetown was extended;[2] and several acts, creating new judicial districts, directing the election of judges by the Legislature, providing for appeals and times of holding court, were passed.[3]

But, vital and pressing as were State problems and necessities, national politics also deeply interested the legislators. From the foundation of the Government a National Bank had been a source of sharp dispute among statesmen; and the people had divided on the issue, the commercial classes ardently favoring such an institution, while the farming and laboring classes were unfriendly to it. The first Bank of the United States, ably and honestly conducted as the fiscal agent of the Government, had been denied a recharter in 1811, partly because of Jefferson's hostility to it, but chiefly by the opposition of those who wished to establish and operate state banks without competition; and the second Bank of the United States, chartered in 1816, had had a stormy and variegated career. After a period of

the trustees of the Academy liable for contracts (*ib.*, 326); against the reapportionment of the State (*ib.*, 342); against reducing fees and salaries of Auditor and Treasurer (*ib.*, 219–20). He seldom was absent, missed scarcely a roll-call, and cast scores of votes, mostly on technical motions and unimportant matters.

[1] *House Journal*, Sess. 1834–5, 504–5, 511–2. Act, Feb. 12, *Laws of Illinois*, 1835, 7–14.

The bill was passed by a majority of only one and was the result of log-rolling. The 'making of a State's attorney made a State bank.' Ford, 171–2.

All Whigs were for the National Bank and most of them voted for this State institution. *Ib.*, 170. Ford says that there was no necessity for a State bank at that time. *Ib.*, 172–7; see especially, *Frontier State:* Pease, 304–5.

[2] Act, Feb. 12, 1835. *Laws of Illinois*, 1835, 21–2.

[3] Acts, Jan. 7, 17, and Feb. 13, 1835. *Ib.*, 150, 153, 167–72.

bad management, it, too, was successful and business had come to depend upon it for a trustworthy currency and the maintenance of stable conditions.

Soon after the election of Andrew Jackson, however, differences between the Bank and the President developed which speedily grew into hostility on both sides. The Bank was accused of subsidizing the press, buying influential politicians, corrupting Congress — worse still, of manipulating credits for its own advantage.

But the Bank was supported by the business interests of the country and Clay, Webster, and other powerful men in the National Senate and House were its determined champions. Influenced by hatred of the administration as much as by devotion to the Bank, these men had induced the Bank to apply formally to Congress in 1832 for a renewal of its charter which was to expire in 1836. This maladroit gesture was interpreted by Jackson as a move against him, the President accepted the challenge, and thus the Presidential campaign of 1832 had been fought largely on the issue of Bank or no Bank.

The popular voice was thunderous against the dread 'money power' of the East, and in support of 'the people's champion.' Jackson was re-elected,[1] and, thus sustained and heartened, he ordered that no more public funds be deposited with the Bank and was about to remove government money already there. Thereupon the Senate denounced Jackson's course as lawless, and the President replied by a protest which the Senate refused to enter on its Journal — a situation which aroused deep anger on both sides.

Of necessity, the Bank began to call its loans, and to the discerning signs were already apparent of the financial storm and business disaster which soon were to sweep over the land.[2] The Whigs denounced Jackson more bitterly than ever and the Democrats rallied to the cause of the 'Old Hero' with fiery enthusiasm. Clay and other anti-Jackson Senators were mere

[1] Clay was humiliatingly beaten, receiving forty-nine electoral votes to two hundred and nineteen for Jackson, eighteen being cast for other candidates.

[2] This business cataclysm was not wholly due to Jackson's attack on the Bank since the economic depression was world-wide in extent. See Channing, v, 455–8.

attorneys of the oppressive corporation and 'Menetekel is already written upon the Marble Palace,' declared the *Illinois Advocate*, voicing popular sentiment.[1]

So came the one notable political contest that took place in the Legislature of Illinois during the session of 1834–35, on a question which most concerned Lincoln for more than a decade. Those fundamental principles of national power under the Constitution, which Lincoln had already adopted and of which he was to become the greatest practical exponent, were the very crux of the Bank controversy.

On Monday, January 5, 1835, Jesse B. Thomas of Madison County introduced resolutions, with a long preamble, stating with vigor and ability the Democratic position on the Bank, stoutly supporting the course of President Jackson, and particularly approving the Administration's course toward France in relation to American claims upon that nation.[2]

Soon the matter came to a head [3] and the votes cast by Lincoln are of interest, showing his early views upon the grave constitutional and other questions involved in the Bank controversy. He voted against a motion to lay the resolutions on the table [4] and for a Whig amendment declaring 'a National Bank to be both useful and expedient.' [5] Lincoln then voted against the preamble and against every resolution, except that condemning the Senate for refusing to enter Jackson's protest upon its Journal and two others of a formal nature.[6] The next day the

[1] Jan. 18, 1834. 'The Marble Palace' was the popular name for the United States Bank at Philadelphia. See *Second Bank of the United States:* Ralph C. H. Catterall; Channing, v, 434–54; *Party Battles of the Jackson Period:* Claude Bowers, 287–385; *Life of Andrew Jackson:* John Spencer Bassett; and Beveridge, iv, 168–208, 288–9, 529–35.

[2] *House Journal*, Sess. 1834–5, 213–6. Thomas's resolutions and preamble were published in full in the Democratic organ, the *Illinois Advocate*, Jan. 21, 1835. The *Advocate* called the attention of Eastern Whig papers to the adoption of these resolutions by the Senate and observed, 'We hope the Whigs will make no further calculations on Illinois.'

[3] *House Journal*, Sess. 1834–5, 216–7.

[4] Defeated, forty-two nays to eight ayes, Lincoln voting nay. *Ib.*, 258.

[5] *Ib.*, 258–9. The amendment was beaten by a majority of nine.

[6] *Ib.*, 259–63. These other resolutions approved the Illinois delegation for supporting Jackson's administration and directed the Governor to transmit the resolutions.

These ballotings are important as showing the temper of the Legislature and the fluctuations in voting. The votes on the resolution condemning the Bank for mis-

Senate adopted similar resolutions by a vote of seventeen ayes to nine nays.[1]

But the friends of the Bank would not acknowledge defeat. Twelve days later the Bank resolutions were again considered, amended and adopted, Lincoln voting for them.[2] Still the matter was not settled. The vote was immediately reconsidered, and the fight renewed. After debate and a mass of parliamentary thrusts and parries, the resolutions as amended were again adopted, Lincoln once more voting aye.[3] Seemingly his views were not clear, though favorable to the Bank.

Heated debates in the House were supplemented by continuous discussion in the lobby which was a place almost equal to the House itself in influencing legislative opinion. Indeed, this third House may have been more effective on members.[4] After adjournment, especially at night, the lobby was always thronged, speeches made, and debates held without parliamentary restraints. Thus for nearly three weeks Lincoln heard what was said on all phases of the National Bank and the currency; but it does not appear that he took part in the controversy.

Finally, by the dim light of candles, the General Assembly finished its work and, sometime before midnight, February 13, 1835, adjourned *sine die*.[5] His first legislative experience thus ended, Lincoln went back to New Salem and again took up his surveying and handling of the scanty mail. The sum of his sojourn in Vandalia had been the making of friends, lessons in legislative procedure and manipulation, and the acquiring of

conduct and against recharter were ayes thirty-seven, nays fourteen; on approving Jackson's removal of deposits, ayes thirty-five, nays fifteen; on condemning the Senate for refusing to receive Jackson's protest, ayes forty-six, nays five; on instructing Illinois Senators and Representatives to oppose recharter and restoration of deposits, ayes forty-three, nays eight; on approving Jackson's course on the French claims, ayes twenty-nine, nays twenty-two; on approving the Illinois delegation for supporting Jackson's administration, ayes forty-four, nays seven; and on requesting the Governor to transmit, ayes forty-five, nays five.

[1] *Illinois Advocate*, Jan. 21, 1835. [2] *House Journal*, Sess. 1834–5, 355–7.

[3] Thirty-one ayes to twenty-four nays. *Ib.*, 358–9.

[4] The lobby was the object of much good humored badinage. Once a satirical notice was published, signed 'Coke, Speaker' and 'Littleton, Clerk,' calling the lobby to assemble and take charge of legislation. *Illinois State Register*, June 17, 1837. The lobby was made up of important men. Herndon, I, 163.

[5] *House Journal*, Sess. 1834–5, 572–4.

knowledge of basic constitutional principles. He had heard great questions discussed by able and informed men. He had met cultivated women, too, and, in short, had visited a new world. Small wonder that, when he reached New Salem, he plunged into study with such abandon that his health suffered and friends thought him mentally affected. Henceforth the log-cabin hamlet on the Sangamon held little or nothing that was attractive to the aspiring young Lincoln.

So much remained to be done and so generally desired was a reapportionment of the State, that Governor Duncan called an extra session of the Legislature. It met December 7, 1835, and, from the beginning,[1] Lincoln took active and frequent part in the proceedings.[2] On the third day he moved to lay on the table a resolution for the reapportionment of the State.[3]

In an effort to amend the law incorporating the State Bank, there were much debate and some curious balloting. Lincoln voted to reserve to the State 'the right to repeal this section [the one then being enacted], whenever the public interest may require the same;'[4] yet he moved to strike out this very reservation and to add, instead, a new section providing that the Bank should report to every general session of the Legislature 'the amounts of debts due *from* said corporation, the amount of debts due *to* the same; the amount of specie in its vaults, and an account of all lands then owned by the same, and the amount for which such lands have been taken; and, moreover, if said corporation shall at any time neglect or refuse to submit its books,

[1] The *Sangamo Journal* (Dec. 5, 1835) anticipated a lively winter for its readers: Congress, Legislature, 'politics, the War in Texas, the threatened war with France,' etc., etc.

[2] For example: road petition (*House Journal*, Spl. Sess. 1835–6, 28); notice of a bill supplementary to the insolvent debtor law of 1829 (*ib.*, 32); memberships of select committees (*ib.*, 33, 34, 66); demand for ayes and noes on the convention system (*ib.*, 27); an important amendment to the State Bank bill (*ib.*, 124).

[3] *Ib.*, 28. This motion meant merely that the subject should be taken up later. Since the apportionment involved partisan politics, this motion indicates that Lincoln was becoming one of the Whig floor leaders.

[4] *Ib.*, 108. Lincoln merely voted for the bill after the reservation had been adopted by general consent. Reservation to Legislatures of the power to repeal or amend charters and other corporate privileges was the method adopted by State Legislatures when granting franchises, to avoid the decision of the Supreme Court of the United States in the Dartmouth College case, 1819, that a franchise is a contract and cannot be impaired. See Beveridge, IV, 220–81.

papers, and all and everything necessary to a full and fair examination of its affairs, to any person or persons appointed by the General Assembly, for the purpose of making such examination, the said corporation shall forfeit its charter.' [1]

The House *Journal* indicates that a flurry arose over Lincoln's motion, but, without roll-call, the House refused to strike out and by a vote of thirty-four to fifteen rejected his amendment. In his turn, he voted against an amendment for a heavy penalty on the State Bank for extending the time of redeeming its notes; and the bill finally passed by consent.[2] He also steadily upheld measures for the building of the Illinois and Michigan Canal.[3]

Echoes of the storm raging in Washington over the Bank of the United States again sounded in the tumble-down brick capitol of Illinois. After several days of debate the Senate, by a vote of fifteen to ten,[4] sent to the House for concurrence a joint resolution demanding that the National Senate expunge from its *Journal* the now famous resolutions of that body censuring Jackson for the removal of deposits from the Bank of the United States. Lincoln and fifteen other Whigs voted against this resolution which was adopted, however, by a vote of more than two to one. Several Whigs even supported it.[5]

Indeed national politics continually intruded on the work of the General Assembly. A Democratic Convention was held in Vandalia, December 7, 1835, and issued an address to the people in behalf of Van Buren,[6] and plans were laid to put through the House strong resolutions designed to aid the party in the ensuing Presidential campaign.[7] Early in the session the Senate, Whig

[1] *House Journal*, Spl. Sess. 1835–6, 124–5. [2] *Ib.*, 125–6.

[3] *Ib.*, 39–40, 46, 54, 69, 71, 119.

[4] *Sangamo Journal*, Dec. 19, 1835.

[5] *House Journal*, Spl. Sess. 1835–6, 44, 62–3. The Vandalia correspondent of the *Sangamo Journal*, who almost certainly was Lincoln, predicted that if the Senate resolution passed the House at all, 'the majority will be small.' *Sangamo Journal*, Dec. 19, 1835.

[6] *Ib.*, Dec. 5, 1835. *Illinois Advocate*, Feb. 17, 1836. This campaign document filled three and one half columns of the Democratic organ and was signed by six leading Democrats, including Douglas, who probably wrote it. Much time and care were expended upon it, and it was not finished until Dec. 31, 1835, more than three weeks after the date of the Convention. *Ib.*

[7] *Life of Stephen A. Douglas:* Frank E. Stevens, *Journal Ill. State Hist. Soc.*, XVI, 295.

by a majority of one, passed a resolution nominating for President, Hugh L. White, United States Senator from Tennessee. Immediately the Democratic minority filed a vigorous protest which was printed in the Democratic organ.[1]

Thus State and National politics became intertwined. The party convention as a method of nominating candidates was not new as applied to states. In Illinois Stephen A. Douglas advocated and the Democrats had adopted it.[2] Already a Democratic National Convention at Baltimore, under orders from Jackson, had nominated Martin Van Buren of New York and Richard M. Johnson of Kentucky, as the Democratic candidates for President and Vice President in the campaign of the following year.

From the first the Whigs looked with disfavor upon this Democratic device and the Illinois Whigs were particularly antagonistic to it,[3] albeit their leader and idol, Henry Clay, had been nominated by a national convention in 1832. Democratic irritation was further inflamed by the anti-Jackson men taking the name of Whig.

Soon after the nomination of White for the presidency by the Whig majority of the Illinois Senate, a blazing Democratic resolution was introduced into the House denouncing 'the false and arrogant claims of the Webster, White, and Harrison party to the exclusive use of the ancient and honorable name of *Whig*,' endorsing the nomination by the Baltimore Convention of Van Buren and Johnson, approving the convention system, viewing with alarm the spurious Whig efforts to divide the Democratic party, exalting Jackson and assailing his foes.[4] These pronouncements, with an almost incoherent preamble,[5] were adopted by a strict party vote,[6] Lincoln voting nay.

[1] *Illinois Advocate*, Dec. 23, 1835; Feb. 17, 1836.

[2] *Frontier State:* Pease, 251–7; Ford, 203. See Ford's admirable description of a convention. Ford, 205–6. And see pre-convention editorial denouncing the Whig position in *Illinois State Register*, May 6, 1836. Douglas was then only twenty-three years old.

[3] Ford, 203. [4] *House Journal*, Spl. Sess. 1835–6, 211–2.

[5] This preamble declared that: 'Whereas, During the late War with England in 1812; and during the great political struggles of 1798–1812–1824 and 1828, the people

[6] Thirty-one ayes to twenty nays. *House Journal*, Spl. Sess. 1835–6, 233. About the year 1833 those opposed to Jackson began to call themselves Whigs.

The enraged Whigs fought hard. Lincoln's colleague from Sangamon, John Dawson, moved an amendment that such resolutions were beyond the duties of 'the Representatives of a free people;' and Stuart asked for debate by referring the entire matter to the Committee of the whole House.[1] The Democrats refused. Whig resolutions against the convention system were quickly offered, again the Whigs asked for debate, again the Democrats peremptorily declined. Lincoln voted for the Whig resolution condemning party conventions which, however, was defeated by a vote of thirty-two to nineteen; for one asserting that every man 'has an undeniable right to become a candidate . . . without the sanction of a caucus or convention,' which was carried almost unanimously; for that declaring that 'the convention system ought not to receive encouragement or approbation from Legislative bodies,' which was defeated by only one vote; and for the resolution declaring that public officers should not attempt to influence elections, which only seven members had the temerity to oppose.[2]

Then the House again voted on the Democratic resolutions. Lincoln demanded a division of the question, and the wild preamble, together with each of the resolutions already described, was finally adopted, Lincoln voting against every one of them.[3] Influential Democrats from all over the State were in Vandalia watchful of their party's welfare, while prominent Whigs, on a similar mission, were absent. 'There are no White men here from a distance,' laments the Vandalia correspondent of the

of New York, Pennsylvania, Virginia, and the Southern and Western States, a great majority of whom are now supporting the election of Martin Van Buren, and Richard M. Johnson, and opposed to the election of Hugh L. White, were of the Democratic Party; and as the Federalists of the New England States, who are now supporting Webster for President; and opposed Madison the War President, and Democratic candidate in 1814; when the success of the war depended upon the democratic party, and opposed General Jackson in 1824, and voted against him in Congress in 1825 — the People's candidate — opposed to Executive Patronage; and as the State of South Carolina, now supporting Hugh L. White, has taken the lead in the measures of Nullification. Therefore Resolved, etc.'

[1] When the House went into Committee of the Whole it was for the purpose of preliminary debate and amendment. House Rules 38 and 39. *House Journal*, Spl. Sess. 1835–6, 58.

Dawson had been elected as a Democrat, but became a Whig about this time, as did many other Democrats.

[2] *Ib.*, 233–4. [3] *Ib.*, 238–40.

Sangamo Journal, 'while the hotels are lined with the ruffle-shirted Vannies.[1] There is no one here whose sole business it is to puff Judge White; consequently I seldom hear his name except when I go among *the people*, where (God be praised!) I hear nothing else.' [2]

Stuart and Lincoln, with an eye to the contest in the next Legislature over the removal of the State capital to Springfield, seem to have cast their votes with foresight when the granting of favors, even appropriations of State money to particular counties, was brought to decision by roll-call.[3] They also supported a popular resolution that Congress grant to the State the right to enter not more than half a million acres of government land at a dollar and a quarter an acre upon ten years credit, to aid Illinois in making internal improvements.[4]

Necessary legislation for starting work on the Illinois and Michigan Canal was enacted,[5] the State reapportioned and, in response to the demand for internal improvements, several railway companies incorporated,[6] all but one of little or no importance. These, however, were but a small beginning of the riot of improvement laws that were to make the next Legislature one of the most notable in the history of Illinois. The movement for State construction and ownership which so powerfully moulded the legislation of the following year, was already under way. On Saturday forenoon, February 7, 1836, the extra session of the House was adjourned.[7]

In such fashion went forward Lincoln's training in legislation and the ways of public men. Back to New Salem he journeyed,

[1] Supporters of Hugh L. White or Martin Van Buren.

[2] *Sangamo Journal*, Dec. 19, 1835.

[3] For example $300 to Edgar County and $400 to Jefferson County to be expended by the County Commissioners 'for the improvement of the public roads therein.' *House Journal*, Spl. Sess. 1835–6, 292.

[4] *Ib.*, 360–1.

[5] *Laws of Illinois*, 2 Sess. 1835–6, 145–54. The plans for the canal involved a cost of $9,000,000, 'a mere nothing' to this Legislature, observes Gov. Ford. Ford, 197.

[6] Of the Illinois Central, the *Illinois Advocate* declared that it was 'a noble enterprise . . . the backbone of the State,' and predicted that it would be extended to Nashville to meet at that city the railroads from Charleston and New Orleans. *Illinois Advocate*, Feb. 24, 1836. The history of the Illinois Central is related in *History of Transportation in the United States before* 1860 (Carnegie Institution): Victor S. Clark, 513–47.

[7] *House Journal*, Spl. Sess. 1835–6, 409, 414.

with increased distaste for the rough pleasures and placid joys of that hamlet which he was soon to abandon — but not before he should again be elected to the Legislature.

Party discipline had now become so strict that the Democrats, even of New Salem, did not again offer to Lincoln their organized support; but Sangamon County turned strongly Whig in the ensuing election and, as we have seen, Lincoln once more received a big majority. At the opening of the session of the General Assembly Monday, December 5, 1836, Stuart no longer being a member,[1] Lincoln was the Whig floor leader, recognized on all hands as a clever parliamentary tactician and likely to become the manager in the House. Only adroit and skilful persons — 'sleek men,' as Governor Ford calls them [2] — succeeded, Lincoln had observed; and since the one great contest of his life thus far — a contest the outcome of which was to have strong and directive influence on his career — was at hand, he was prepared to meet and overcome all the craft and guile that should oppose him. His supreme purpose now was to secure the removal of the capital to Springfield; upon the achievement of that design he concentrated every faculty during the next three months.

In 1833 the Legislature had provided that at the general election held the following year, the people should vote for a place at which the capital should be permanently established, but no majority was given for any location. Alton led with 7511, Vandalia followed with 7148, Springfield was third with 7044, Jacksonville, Peoria and 'The Geographical Centre,' dividing 1532 votes among them.[3] The Alton interest was very powerful

[1] Stuart was not a candidate for the Legislature in 1836, having run for Congress instead. But he was in Vandalia as a lobbyist for the removal of the State Capital to Springfield. See p. 178, *infra*. The Stuart whose name appears on the roll-calls during this session was Robert Stuart of Tazewell Co. *House Journal*, Sess. 1836–7, 4.

[2] Ford, 103.

[3] Springfield stoutly maintained that the law for this election was unfair. 'It was designed to divide the vote of the north, so that by artful management . . . a majority of votes, or at least a large plurality, could be obtained for Alton;' four places near Springfield had been named for which electors could vote, and thus the Northern men divided; some counties did not vote at all. At the same election 33,239 votes were cast for Governor and only 23,355 for all capital locations; it was sheer trickery, but for which Springfield would have received at least 14,000 votes and beaten Vandalia and Alton badly. *Sangamo Journal*, Sept. 27, 1834.

and either that town or Vandalia preferred the other over Springfield.

By the reapportionment of 1835 Sangamon County, with 17,571 white population, had seven representatives and two senators, the largest delegation in the Legislature. All were trained men, most of them having had legislative experience. Because of the great height of these men, they were given the nickname of the 'Long Nine.' They acted together and voted on all questions so as to promote the interests of Springfield.[1]

Vandalia had tried to impress the legislators.[2] The old State House was about to fall and a new frame building had been erected which, however, was unfinished — the plastering being so damp and the rooms so cold, that 'additional stoves' had to be put in.[3] But the town had increased in population and enterprise since Lincoln's first sojourn at the capital. There were two or three more stores, one of them advertising, among other things, 'Kid pumps,' another all kinds of shirtings, prints, flannels, cassimeres, 'ladies boots and shoes,' and men's fur, wool and palm leaf hats, while a grocery announced the arrival of three pipes of champagne, French and American brandy, and eight barrels of whisky;[4] and, before the Legislature met and during its sessions, a big advertisement appeared of a bookstore, with a long list of volumes, including law books, Bulwer's novels, as well as *Godey's Lady's Book* and other magazines.[5] A saddle and harness shop had been opened,[6] and the town had at least three doctors who published their professional cards in the press,

[1] Robert L. Wilson to Herndon, Feb. 10, 1866. Weik MSS.

[2] Two years earlier a committee of its citizens had issued a long and careful statement setting forth the advantages of the town, the injustice of the capital law, nay, its unconstitutionality. *Illinois Advocate*, July 19, 1834.

[3] Senate Resolutions, Feb. 3, 1837 (*House Journal*, Sess. 1836–7, 471); and Report of Select Committee (*ib.*, 479–80). The structure cost $16,378.22½ of which $5550 was paid by the State officers, out of the contingent fund and $450 by individual subscriptions, leaving $10,378.22½ unpaid. *Illinois State Register*, Dec. 16, 1836.

[4] *Illinois Advocate*, Jan. 20; *Illinois State Register*, July 29, Aug. 26, 1836.

[5] *Ib.*, Dec. 23, 1836. Also *Illinois Advocate*, Feb. 18, 1835, advertising school books and 'medical, historical and miscellaneous' standard works. A later advertisement included Vattel's *Law of Nations*, Blackstone, Zoller's *Law of Executors*, Jefferson's *Works*, 4 vols., Franklin's *Works*, 2 vols., Robertson's *America* and *Charles V*, Marshall's *Life of Washington*, etc. *Ib.*, Jan. 2, 1836.

[6] *Illinois Advocate*, Dec. 23, 1835.

as was the custom of the time.[1] In short, Vandalia was a place of comparative comfort and culture, energy and good cheer, during the winter of 1836–37.

This Legislature was remarkable not only in what was done but in the quality of its members. There was a strange mingling of vision and blindness, of fine ability bloated with unreasoning optimism; and through all ran the poisonous filaments of the politician's deals and trades. Of the more than one hundred members of House and Senate, not one had been born in Illinois; and this was true, too, of the three members of the Supreme Court, the many lawyers in attendance upon it, and the throng of lobbyists who came to Vandalia whenever the General Assembly met, and who, since great enterprises were at hand, were especially numerous during this session.

Most conspicuous were the members of the Supreme Court — William Wilson, Chief Justice, able and learned; Samuel D. Lockwood, highly educated and a fine lawyer; Thomas C. Brown, 'the Falstaff of the bench,' who never refused nor offered a drink, and made up for his total ignorance of the law by a quick, audacious wit and friendly good nature.[2] All three Justices were ardent Whigs.

Among the attorneys at Vandalia, the most prominent was Justin Butterfield of Chicago, who was attending the Supreme Court, a good lawyer and a cultivated man of sparkling humor,[3] and Josiah Lamborn who was afterwards elected Attorney-General.[4] Gurdon S. Hubbard was an example of the lobbyists. Born in New England, he had become an Indian trader in Illinois, spoke several Indian dialects perfectly, and during the ses-

[1] *Illinois Advocate,* March 16, 1836.

[2] *Reminiscences:* by Usher F. Linder, 73, 264–5. Also *Early Bench and Bar of Illinois:* John Dean Caton, 173. 'If he ever read a law book it was so long ago that he must have forgotten it. . . . He never wrote an opinion.' *Ib.* Judge Caton served with Brown as Justice of the Supreme Court, was an uncommonly able lawyer and became one of the foremost men of the State. He was a Democrat and an ardent supporter of Douglas.

[3] Linder, 87–8; Ford, 295. Twelve years later Butterfield beat Lincoln for Commissioner of the Land Office. See p. 489, *infra.* He was a native of New York, opposed the War of 1812 and came to Chicago to make a new start. It was Butterfield who, although a staunch Whig, said of the Mexican War when his party was opposing it: 'No, by G—d, . . . I opposed one war, and it ruined me, and henceforth I am for *War, Pestilence, and Famine.*' Linder, 87.

[4] *Ib.,* 258–9.

sion, with others scarcely less qualified, performed an Indian war-dance for the amusement of the legislators.[1] Former Governor John Reynolds, the 'Old Ranger,' was there, too,[2] cordial and grave, with the mingled reserve and heartiness of the frontier.

Of all those in Vandalia during that memorable winter, John T. Stuart was the best known. He was over six feet tall, the 'handsomest man in Illinois,' an able, and resourceful lawyer, deferential in manner, benignant of countenance and, for years to come, an influential man in the State.[3] But he was known as a plotter and manipulator — 'Jerry Sly,'[4] his political enemies called this closest associate of Lincoln. The reverse of Stuart in appearance and method was Rev. John Hogan of Alton, of Irish birth, once a Methodist preacher, florid of face, boisterous of manner, bold and outspoken, an incessant talker, frequently in debate, aggressively optimistic, looking at all things through rose-colored spectacles.[5]

Ninian W. Edwards of Springfield, who was 'naturally and constitutionally an aristocrat, and . . . hated democracy . . . as the devil is said to hate holy water,' was an example of the class-conscious higher orders of society. With a manner lofty and aloof, vain, proud of his name and family, he was unpopular.[6] His attire was of the best material, made in the latest mode of fashion. In the State Senate was Cyrus Edwards of Madison County, uncle of Ninian W. Edwards, and his equal in apparel and conduct. 'The great Edwards family' was well represented in the General Assembly of 1836–37.[7] Into this family Lincoln was to marry within five years.

Of the same type was another Whig, Edwin B. Webb of White County, born in Kentucky, of an old Virginia family, refined,

[1] Linder, 333–4. Hubbard had been a member of a preceding Legislature and introduced the first railroad bill to defeat the Illinois & Michigan Canal scheme. It passed the House and was beaten in the Senate by only one vote.

[2] *Ib.*, 148–51. [3] *Ib.*, 347–9; Duis, 122. [4] Linder, 347–9.

[5] *Ib.*, 59–60; 371–3. Hogan was one of those who sought to compose the quarrel between Elijah Lovejoy and the citizens of Alton in 1837. Linder, then Attorney General of the State, strove to avert the collision and, failing to make peace, took with Hogan the side of the citizens against Lovejoy.

[6] *Ib.*, 279–81.

[7] *Ib.*, 353–5. Cyrus Edwards was six feet four inches tall, the exact stature of Lincoln.

undersized, alert. He was devoted to Lincoln, who returned his affection.[1] Another friend of Lincoln in the House whose adherence grew ever closer through the years, was 'a slim, handsome young man, with auburn hair, sky-blue eyes, with the elegant manners of a Frenchman,' Jesse K. Dubois of Lawrence County.[2] John A. McClernand, then of Shawneetown and a fighting Democrat who, twenty-five years later, was to bear so gallant and distinguished a part in the Civil War, was also a member of the House. He was only twenty-four years old, was uncommonly able, a fluent speaker,[3] and quickly developed into one of the Democratic leaders.

The Speaker, James Semple, originally a tanner but now a lawyer, was a Democrat of outstanding note and influence, strong-willed, domineering, but highly capable, though neither eloquent nor learned.[4] Orlando B. Ficklin of Wabash County was also a member of the House, well-informed, resourceful and, like Lincoln, a notable mimic, wag, and story teller.[5] One of the most popular members was a slender young man of twenty-six but already a veteran, having been dangerously wounded while serving as a soldier in Florida, James Shields, with whom, in a few years, Lincoln was to have a serious personal difficulty. Shields spoke and wrote French, was a hard student,[6] generous, frank, engaging, and utterly without physical fear. He was a thorough-going Democrat, and was thrice to become a Senator of the United States from three different States and to hold more offices, civil and military, than almost any other man in American history.

More of Lincoln's mould was Archibald Williams of Adams County, over six feet tall, angular and uncouth. He and Lincoln sat near to each other in the southeast corner of the House and were friends and confidants. So striking was their ungainly appearance that a stranger asked, 'Who in the hell are those two ugly men?' Years afterward Lincoln declared that Williams was 'the strongest-minded and clearest headed man he ever

[1] Linder, 266–7.

[2] *Ib.*, 68–9; Dubois named one of his sons for Lincoln, Major Lincoln Dubois of Hinsdale, Ill.

[3] *Ib.*, 71–2. [4] *Ib.*, 218–9. [5] *Ib.*, 110–2.

[6] *Life of James A. Shields:* W. M. Condon, 219

saw.'[1] One of the most picturesque figures in the House and a member of power and influence was Usher F. Linder, who, many years later, wrote descriptions of his fellow members in this historic session. He, too, was more than six feet in stature, slender, raw-boned, and as awkward as Lincoln. He was born in Kentucky a few weeks after the birth of Lincoln and in the same county.[2] He was well-educated, a good lawyer, almost irresistible before a jury, a vigorous partisan, formidable in debate, and a 'terror on the stump.'

At this session appeared a young representative from Morgan County who, soon thereafter, pressed Lincoln hard for the Whig leadership of the House and within five years passed him in political career. He was a college graduate and a lawyer, able, combative, and courageous, but without Lincoln's adroitness and political cleverness. Tall, well-dressed, with dark eyes, thick black hair and bold, determined, intellectual face, John J. Hardin was an attractive, manly figure.[3] His father was Martin D. Hardin, Secretary of State of Kentucky, where the son was born. In exactly a decade after Hardin entered the Legislature of Illinois, it was to be his fortune to be killed in battle while leading his regiment at Buena Vista.

With Cyrus Edwards in the State Senate, was Orville H. Browning of Quincy, a stalwart Whig. He was a finely educated man, a careful and successful lawyer, a good politician, stately and courteous, always dressed with scrupulous care. He was to become one of the founders of the Republican party and, during the War, Lincoln's mouthpiece in the United States Senate. His wife was with him and Linder makes particular mention of her as 'an elegant and accomplished lady.'[4] It was she to whom Lincoln wrote the account of his escape from the matrimonial 'bondage' to Mary Owens.[5] In the Senate also was William H.

[1] Linder, 238–43.

[2] *Ib.*, 21. Linder was a Democrat in 1836–7, but became a Whig in 1838–9 and remained such until, as he declares, the Whigs were merged in the Abolitionists whom Linder, like most men of the time, greatly disliked. *Ib.*, 281.

[3] Daguerreotype of Hardin of a few years later.

[4] Linder, 83. She was Eliza Caldwell, of a Kentucky family, and married Browning Feb. 25, 1836.

[5] See p. 156, *supra*.

Davidson of White County, a brother-in-law of Chief Justice Wilson, a handsome man, well educated, wealthy, of the old Virginia school, and, of course, an unyielding Whig.[1]

Of all members of the General Assembly, however, the most curious in appearance was a newly elected Democratic member from Morgan County, Stephen A. Douglas, who, from the first, attracted more attention than any other person in Vandalia. Only slightly more than five feet tall, he seemed a dwarf among the stalwart men about him — 'looked like a boy,' his colleagues said.[2] A mighty head covered with a great mass of thickly growing dark brown hair, powerful neck and shoulders and deep chest, made more conspicuous his short stature. His voice was a deep barytone — some said a vibrant bass. Strong, aggressive jaws and chin added to the impression of singular force, even bellicosity, given by his whole physical make-up; but the friendly, generous mouth softened the severity of his appearance.

If, aside from his small height, one feature was more striking than others, it was his eyes of deepest blue, which were uncommonly large, intelligent, bold, alert, and so brilliant that a newspaper correspondent describes them as 'shooting out electric fires.'[3] He was, if possible, more ambitious than Lincoln, an incessant talker, fecund in plan, adroit in management. With the vision of the statesman he was already an adept in the tricks of the politician. As ingratiating as he was combative, he made friends quickly and on every hand, and these friends stuck to him through thick and thin.

Born in Vermont, April 23, 1813, he was twenty-three years of age. His father was a physician, and tradition says his grandfather had been one of Washington's soldiers at Valley Forge. Educated in the common schools of his native State and at Brandon Academy, he had also learned the trade of cabinet-making. He studied law in New York and thence went to Illinois to practise his profession. He arrived, practically destitute, at Winchester, Morgan County, where at first he taught school for a living. He soon removed to Jacksonville, opened a law

[1] Linder, 272–3. [2] *Ib.*, 78.

[3] Correspondent of New York *Times*, as quoted in *Life of Douglas:* H. M. Flint, 14.

office, and quickly growing in popularity, took active and vigorous part in politics. A local quarrel resulted in his election as State's Attorney, which office he resigned when elected to the Legislature. Because of an effective speech at a Democratic meeting at Jacksonville in 1834 when all others in his party were disheartened and despondent, he had been given the title of 'The Little Giant' — a title which his work in the Legislature was to confirm and establish permanently. Stephen A. Douglas was now to make his first appearance as a law-maker, and, on a larger stage than his county, as a politician and a statesman.[1]

Such in general was the Legislature, the lobby and the surroundings in the midst of which Lincoln found himself in his third session of the General Assembly. There was so much drinking during those winter months that even Linder makes mention of it — 'a little too convivial most of us were in early times,' he observes.[2] Now and then, indeed, a member was too drunk to debate well.[3] Duels were sometimes fought, and challenges expected when sufficient offence was given. Although advertisements of runaway slaves were conspicuous in the Vandalia newspapers and appeared with increasing frequency,[4] no one did or said anything about the matter.

After organization on Monday, December 5, the House again chose James Semple speaker. Immediately Lincoln, as Whig floor leader, moved that the House proceed to the election of a principal clerk.[5] Soon afterward Douglas, from the Committee on Petitions, submitted a report and bill for the organization of

[1] 'Autobiography of Stephen A. Douglas,' *Journal Ill. State Hist. Socy.*, v, 323–42; 'Life of Stephen A. Douglas,' Frank E. Stevens, *ib.*, xvi, 247–86; *Stephen A. Douglas: A Study in American Politics*, Allen Johnson, 3–22; *Life of Stephen A. Douglas:* James W. Sheahan, 1–27.

'During that session Douglass made himself known all over the State.' John Wentworth to Herndon, Feb. 4, 1866. Weik MSS.

[2] Linder, 74–5, 228.

[3] *Ib.*, 52–3. Midway in this session a Vandalia grocery advertised an astonishing variety of groceries and liquors, including champagne, six kinds of brandy in pipes and barrels, Holland and American gin, several barrels of Irish and Monongahela whisky, six barrels of beer, Burgundy, Madeira, Sherry, claret, and two brands of Port wines. Also 'bottles assorted, pint and half pint flasks.' *Illinois State Register*, Jan. 19, 1837.

[4] In the *Illinois State Register* of Dec. 23, 1836, there were four such advertisements. And see *ib.*, Jan. 6, March 9, 16, April 1, 8, 1836.

[5] *House Journal*, Sess. 1836–7, 5–8.

a new county to be formed of a part of Sangamon County. A minority report against the division of Sangamon County was offered, and Lincoln moved that it be spread on the Journal of the House in order 'that his constituents might see that report.'[1] Linder objected and a lively interchange between him and Lincoln ensued. Lincoln thought it 'uncourteous and a departure from the rules of etiquette' for Linder to meddle in the matter at all. Linder sarcastically thanked Lincoln for 'the lesson which he had read to the House on etiquette;' but if his constituents wanted the minority report 'let them print it out of their own pockets. They are rich enough, God knows: they hold the bag like Judas, and with as little merit as he.' For reasons soon to be stated Lincoln made no reply, and his motion was beaten by a vote of nearly two to one.[2]

Early in the session Richard M. Young was elected Senator of the United States, Lincoln voting for his friend Archibald Williams on each of the three ballots. As was the custom of the time, Senator-elect Young gave a banquet to his adherents at which much whisky and champagne were consumed and riotous merriment abounded. Douglas and Shields, as the smallest, lightest, and most agile of the banqueters, finally mounted the table, dancing together back and forth upon it amid shouts of approval and to such destruction of glasses, bottles, and other tableware that Young had to pay six hundred dollars for the damage done.[3]

Throughout the session, news-letters concerning the proceedings of the Legislature appeared in the Whig paper at Springfield, the *Sangamo Journal*, and some appear to have been written by Lincoln. While in New Salem he had begun to write pieces for the *Journal*[4] and the style of those from Vandalia strongly suggests him.[5] His authorship was suspected, it seems. A quaint letter dated Vandalia, December 30, 1836, relates that

[1] *House Journal*, Sess. 1836–7, 82–3, 86.

[2] Forty-four nays to twenty-four ayes. *Illinois State Register*, Jan. 12, 1837, reporting House proceedings of Dec. 21, 1836.

[3] Stevens, 299.

[4] Statement J. H. Matheny, no date. Weik MSS.

[5] For example, a one column letter in the *Journal*, Jan. 16, 1836, dated Vandalia, Jan. 6.

certain persons, offended by one of these reports in the *Journal* from the State capital, and 'believing . . . that your correspondent was one of your county delegation,' took underhand measures against Sangamon County.[1]

Although the two subjects of first importance before the Legislature were internal improvements and the location of the State capital, national politics displaced them at first and, indeed, throughout the session continued to absorb members who sometimes were aroused to fighting pitch.

In his message to the Legislature, Governor Duncan violently denounced President Jackson for his hostility to the Bank of the United States. Unless Jackson's course was rebuked and checked, 'we shall . . . have established a despotism more absolute than that of any civilized government in the world.' Upon the attitude of State legislatures depended 'the fate and future destiny of our *free republican* government.' [2]

The Whigs were jubilant, the Democrats furious. Their rage was the hotter because of what they considered to have been the Governor's apostasy from his party.[3] His message was a 'firebrand,' cried the Democratic organ.[4] A select Committee [5] replied to the Governor's assault on the President. The Committee's report, written and presented by McClernand, was able, restrained, impressive. The President's constitutional right of dismissal and appointment of officials 'results necessarily from the nature of the presidential office,' and had been

[1] *Sangamo Journal*, Jan. 6, 1837. The satire of this letter, in which pretence is made that the *Journal* correspondent was formerly on the staff of the *National Intelligencer* at Washington, where he could not make a living and that now, 'with almost murdered conscience,' is forced to write utterly false reports, is in Lincoln's best vein at that time of his life.

[2] *House Journal*, Sess. 1836–7, 19–26.

[3] Duncan had been sent to Congress as a Democrat and Jackson man, but had become hostile to the Administration while in Washington. This change was not known to the people generally when he was elected Governor in 1834. Ford, 168.

'Gov. Duncan was the last man in the State from whom an attack on Gen. Jackson should come; for he cannot but remember that he owes his present exaltation in the political scale, by rising on the popularity of the very man against whom he has now turned his weapons. Ingratitude — "How sharper than a serpents tooth it is."' *Illinois State Register*, Dec. 23, 1836.

[4] *Ib.*

[5] Douglas was on this Committee. *House Journal*, Sess. 1836–7, 29. *Illinois State Register*, Jan. 6, 1837.

practised by every previous President. Jackson was also sound in protesting against the resolution of the Senate condemning his course toward the Bank as unconstitutional and lawless; the Senate alone, cannot 'accuse and condemn' the President 'of an impeachable offence.' Impeachment was the business of the House, not the Senate.

The removal by the President of public money from the Bank of the United States, was clearly within his constitutional power. The only question was that of policy; but Jackson had often and emphatically declared that there were ample grounds for his action, and the people had sustained him — that was conclusive as to Jackson's policy. Also, the supervisory control by the President 'over the public money, as over other public property' had been exercised by all former Chief Executives. With brilliant ability the Committee stoutly defends the appointment to office of members of Congress. The expenditure of unusual sums of money — 'extravagance,' as Duncan had branded it — is explained by giving specific items of extraordinary but absolutely necessary outlay.[1]

So the Committee could see no reason for the concurrence of the Legislature in the Governor's 'charges'; but the Committee could not help seeing a 'perplexing and inscrutable mystery' in the 'emanation of so grave charges from such a source'—from Joseph Duncan, who had been sent to Congress four times by the Democrats of Illinois as an avowed Jackson man, and who had been a supporter of the Administration when many of the things he now denounced were done. The Committee, therefore, proposed resolutions approving Jackson's Administration and rejecting 'the correctness of the charges' preferred by Governor Duncan.[2]

Instantly, John J. Hardin of Morgan County, who, sneeringly

[1] The extinguishment of Indian titles, the increase of Indian annuities, the Seminole War, 'the protection of our Southern frontier from the violence of the War now raging between Mexico and Texas.' Contrast all this, said the Committee's report, with the more than eighty-five thousand dollars 'expended during the winter of 1835 by the Senate of the United States, for the printing of public documents, many of which were fraught with the most inflammatory tirades against President Jackson.' The Committee clinches its answer to Duncan's assertion of extravagance, by giving the annual expenditures of the National Government from 1817 to 1834 inclusive.

[2] *House Journal*, Sess. 1836–7, 102–14.

observes the Democratic organ, 'seems to have an itching to see his name in print,' [1] was on his feet. The Whigs had had enough of the fight against the Administration, and Hardin proposed to strike out the Democratic resolutions and adopt a Whig substitute that, in view of the legislation required and expected by the people concerning internal improvements and common schools, it was a waste of time and money to discuss national politics. But, by a vote of fifty-seven nays to twenty-four ayes, Lincoln voting aye,[2] the House refused to strike out the Democratic resolutions. Heated debate consumed the day.[3] Douglas, his deep voice booming through the hall, championed his hero, Jackson, and furiously assailed the Whigs. Duncan's purpose, he thundered, was to rally 'the sinking fortunes of a desperate political faction.' [4]

Great excitement prevailed. There were motions to adjourn, calls of the House, demands for the previous question.[5] The triumphant Democrats pressed their advantage; the desperate Whigs could not escape. The most stubborn of them, including Lincoln, voted that the main question should not be put, and were again badly beaten; [6] the Democratic resolution sustaining Jackson's Administration was adopted by the smashing vote of sixty-four ayes to eighteen nays, Lincoln voting nay; [7] and the resolution of rebuke to Duncan was carried by more than two to one, Lincoln once more voting nay.[8] The House then adjourned over Christmas, until Tuesday, December 27.

[1] *Illinois State Register*, Jan. 24, 1837.

[2] *House Journal*, Sess. 1836–7, 115. [3] *Sangamo Journal*, Dec. 31, 1836.

[4] Stevens, 300–3. Douglas was frequently in debate, speaking for Jackson, for his own wise and practicable plan for two railroads and the Illinois & Michigan Canal, for his idea of voting by printed ballots instead of word of mouth, against granting divorces by personal bills in the Legislature, and for a general divorce law under which Courts alone could grant divorces, etc. See *ib.*, 300–4; and see *Illinois State Register*, Dec. 29, 1836. 'In all the proceedings of this legislature Douglas was active.' Stevens, 306.

[5] 'Every device which the tact of the Opposition party [Whigs] suggested, allowed by the rules of the House, was resorted to by them to defeat the resolutions.' *Illinois State Register*, Dec. 26, 1836.

[6] Fifty-three ayes to twenty-nine nays, Lincoln voting nay. *House Journal*, Sess. 1836–7, 116.

[7] *Ib.*, 117.

[8] Fifty-seven ayes to twenty-five nays. *House Journal*, Sess. 1836–7, 117. 3500 copies of the Democratic report and resolutions 'and the vote thereupon' were ordered to be printed, a most unusual proceeding, and plainly a method of getting a campaign

Thus Lincoln participated in one of those political discussions that were then taking place in State Legislatures throughout the country. McClernand's report was so well done that it amounted to a state paper of no mean rank; and the debate over it in the lobby more even than in the House, the discussion of it in conversations at taverns and wherever men met, afforded instruction in constitutional principles as thorough, perhaps, as Lincoln could have received at any college or university. The powers and duties of the President, the authority of Congress, the nature and disposition of patronage — well-nigh every practical subject with which he would have to deal one day, was examined with sense and learning, though spoiled by partisan heat and prejudice.

Soon another political explosion followed, the effect of which on Lincoln's future was far stronger. Again came the sound of that thunder which he had heard twice before; but now it was nearer and startlingly distinct. This time, indeed, disunion and civil war seemed not vague and distant theories, but concrete and impending probabilities, and this time not from an issue so easily remediable as the tariff which threatened the secession of South Carolina in 1832, but from the profound and complicated facts of slavery and the structure of society throughout half the Nation, together with the militant emotions of those who believed slavery to be a moral crime.

During the decade following the tacit agreement in 1820, that no more slave States should be admitted north of 36° 30′, some amelioration took place in the condition of the slaves; it was generally taken for granted that the vexed question was settled, and North and South were tranquil and harmonious. Generally, but not altogether. Here and there were men and women whose sense of the wrong of slavery would not be appeased by compromise or the slow processes of time and evolution.

On January 1, 1831, one of the great dates in human history, these devoted enthusiasts of freedom found a champion to give voice to their convictions. The publication of the *Liberator* began in Boston. 'I am in earnest, I will not equivocate, I will

document at public expense. The Whigs were obviously in a panic and tried to escape the publication of their names and votes, but the Democrats prevented. *Ib.*, 117–9.

not excuse, I will not retreat a single inch, and I WILL BE HEARD,' exclaimed William Lloyd Garrison, and he cried aloud for immediate and unconditional emancipation. Abolition societies were formed and proclaimed their cause with the ardor of crusaders. During the spring and summer of 1835, these societies sent their pamphlets and pictures broadcast throughout the country, many of them into the slave-holding States.

Peace and quiet were no more. The South was enraged, the North disturbed, yet, for the most part, sympathetic with the South.[1] Having ever in mind the ghastly results of the negro uprising and negro rule in Santo Domingo and with actual or suspected slave insurrections at home to remind them freshly of that horror, Southern men and women felt the abolition propaganda to be an attack on Southern institutions. They firmly believed that the safety of their homes, their very lives, even the continuance of white supremacy were in deadly and imminent peril.

And, indeed, some of the abolition pamphlets were well calculated to terrify and madden the Southern people. Slavery was a 'sin,' slave-holders were 'robbers'; let them beware lest the slaves give 'terrific proof' that they were men. Santo Domingo! It was a 'blazing beacon' of liberty. Instant emancipation, then, or 'human nature must be left to right itself by physical force.' [2]

Such publications, and pictures even more inflammatory, drove Southern men to something like frenzy. During the winter of 1835–36 the matter was debated in the Senate, the Southern Senators declaring that, because of the abolition crusade, the South was facing 'an awful calamity.' They com-

[1] See Channing, v, 152–4.

[2] *The Sin of Slavery and its Remedy*, by Elizur Wright, Jr., N.Y., 1833. Another abolition pamphlet, *The Testimony of God against Slavery, or a Collection of Passages from the Bible*, by Rev. Le Roy Sunderland, Boston, 1835, was even more irritating. The author compares the slaves to the children of Israel, whose God would deliver them from the Egyptians. Most quotations are from the Old Testament.

An address by William Lloyd Garrison delivered to Free People of Color in several northern cities in June, 1831, begins, 'I am ashamed of my own color;' and after sound practical advice, admirably expressed, as to their self-improvement, tells the freedmen that they are still the victims of 'unconstitutional enactments.' As to the slave-holders, if the same force that annihilated the slave-trade 'descends again, they on whom its crash shall fall will not be destroyed before I have warned them.'

pared the Abolitionists to 'madmen approaching their neighbors house with a torch.' Even such able and moderate men as Senator Felix Grundy of Tennessee gave earnest warning of certain catastrophe. Benton, in hot wrath, showed incendiary pictures and 'diabolical publications' which he had himself received. The Abolitionists had turned back the clock of emancipation 'for fifty years,' he said. Grave and sincere charges were made that the 'northern fanatics' were destroying the Union.[1]

Such were conditions when, in the spring of 1836, the Southern States passed resolutions on the subject and transmitted them to their sister States in the North, some of which responded sympathetically, others were silent, and none were hostile. On December 29, 1836, Governor Duncan sent to the Legislature of Illinois a few of these reports, memorials and resolutions, for its consideration.[2]

Virginia asserted that her exclusive right to deal with slavery within her borders — a right given by the Constitution — 'will be maintained at all hazards;' and she asks other States to suppress and punish societies under their jurisdictions which are sending inflammatory pamphlets among the slaves tending to incite them to 'insurrection and revolt.' Virginia's safety is at stake; . . . and she feels that her sister States will not fail her in view of those 'principles of the Union, enforced by the sympathies of common dangers, sufferings and triumphs, which ought to bind us together in fraternal concord. . . . Congress has no constitutional power to abolish slavery in the district of Columbia, or in the territories,' and Virginia would consider such action 'as affording just cause of alarm to the slaveholding States, and bringing the Union into imminent peril.' [3]

Kentucky was out-spoken, determined. The Abolitionists were inciting, through print and pictures, 'insubordination . . . perhaps insurrection' of the slaves. 'For this institution [slavery], the people of Kentucky hold themselves responsible to no earthly tribunal, but will refer their cause to Him alone, through the mysterious dispensations of whose providence, dominion has been given to the white man over the black. He,

[1] *Register of Debates*, XII, Pt. I, 71–810; Adams, IX, 251.

[2] *House Journal*, Sess. 1836–7, 134. [3] Virginia Resolutions, Feb. 16, 1836.

alone, may judge of its compatibility with His will; and of its political expediency, we who witness its practical operation, are best competent to speak.' Kentucky, 'so long as she remains a sovereign member of this confederacy, can never permit *another State* to assail her local institutions, much less a combination of private individuals.' The Abolitionists, individually and as societies, are trying to do what the States themselves cannot do. All history proves that organized zealots can work 'irreparable mischief . . . especially when [they] . . . imagine themselves the special executors of the divine will.' If they become sufficiently numerous 'the history of the American Union, with all the high and glowing visions which now gladden the heart of the patriot, will have been written.' Freedom of speech and press! What 'grosser prostitution of the freedom of the press' could be conceived than 'the effort of the abolitionists to stir up a portion of the population of eleven States . . . to rebellion and bloodshed?'

If, as she fears, all appeal to Northern justice proves to be in vain, then 'certain and tremendous consequences' will ensue; then Kentucky will 'look to her condition,' and 'declare to the world her determined resolution to maintain inviolate, her domestic institution;' and she assures her sister slave-holding States of her 'earnest coöperation . . . to resist, at all hazards, every effort to interfere with that subject, either by Congress, any State, or combination of private persons.' [1]

In her memorial to the other States Alabama, 'with that confidence and good will which should characterize sisters of the same family,' said: 'The dark, deep and malignant design of the abolitionists . . . amongst you, in sending to our country their agents and incendiary pamphlets and publications, lighting up fires of discord in the bosom of our slave population, have never for a moment alienated our affections from the great mass of your citizens — and we have believed and still believe — that when you were fully apprised of the evils which this unholy band of cowardly assassins was bringing upon us,' their fell efforts would be stopped.

'The abolitionists are not numerous, but they are wealthy, ardent and talented. They . . . issue millions of essays, pam-

[1] Kentucky Resolutions, March 1, 1836.

phlets, and pictures, and scatter them amongst our slave population, calculated to urge them to deluge our country in blood. This cannot be tolerated.' So Alabama asks her sister States to prevent the 'malignant deeds of the abolitionists calculated to destroy our peace, and sever this Union,' declares that abolition of slavery in the District of Columbia, 'unless by the desire of its own citizens,' would be a 'violation of the rights of that district . . . and as the commencement of a scheme of usurpation and flagrant injustice.' [1]

The Mississippi resolutions were brief and defiant: 'We urge upon our brethern of the non-slaveholding States . . . as they value the harmony and safety of the Union,' that they suppress by penal laws those who are 'plotting . . . to undermine, disturb or abolish our institutions of domestic slavery, in any manner or by any means, and under any pretext whatever.' [2]

In response to the Southern appeals, Connecticut declared that slavery was a State institution and protected by the Constitution; denounced abolition societies as 'improper, unjustifiable, and dangerous,' and destructive of 'the harmony of the Union;' expressed 'sympathy . . . for the inhabitants of the slaveholding States;' and condemned abolition of slavery in the District of Columbia as 'unjust and impolitic so long as slavery exists in Maryland and Virginia.' But Connecticut thought it unnecessary to enact laws restrictive of the press: 'Truth and Justice have nothing to fear from a free Press in an enlightened community.'

Undoubtedly, continued the Connecticut declaration, the efforts of Abolitionists had 'tended to check the . . . improvements which were taking place in the condition of the slave population . . . whilst they have occasioned much alarm and anxiety to the whites. . . . Public opinion in this country is the supreme law, and whatever may be the legal rights of slave proprietors, they have been restricted and modified by public sentiment.' [3]

The New York resolutions merely endorsed the message of

[1] Alabama Resolutions, Jan. 9, 1836.
[2] Mississippi Resolutions, Feb. 27, 1836.
[3] Connecticut Resolutions, May, 1836.

Governor William L. Marcy condemning abolition societies and the abolition agitation. The people of New York, regardless of party or sect, had, with unexampled 'unanimity,' expressed disapproval of 'the whole system' of the Abolitionists, and 'affection for their brethren of the south.' New York recognizes the right of each State to control, continue or abolish slavery within its limits and gives that right her 'cordial concurrence.' [1]

When these papers were laid before the Illinois Legislature, seven members of the House were appointed on a Joint Committee of the General Assembly, including McClernand, and Lincoln's colleague from Sangamon County, Dan Stone.[2] For two weeks this able Committee worked on the reply which Illinois should make. On Thursday, January 12, 1837, the chairman, James H. Ralston of Adams County, soon to be elected Judge of the Fifth Judicial Circuit,[3] made the Committee's report.

They 'fully appreciate,' they declare, the 'anxiety and alarm . . . produced in the slaveholding states, by the misguided and incendiary movements of the abolitionists.' The Committee 'unanimously concur' that the purposes of the Abolitionists are 'reprehensible' and dangerous to 'every portion of our Union.' Moreover, abolition activities 'have been and will continue to be, disastrous to the slaves.' No 'true friend of the black man can hope to benefit him' through abolition societies.

'Before their organization, changes were rapidly making in public opinion' toward ameliorating the conditions of the slaves; 'they had already been elevated in morality and intelligence far above the low estate of their fathers and kindred in their native land;' and 'christian freemen' were looking forward to the moral redemption of Africa from 'Pagan darkness' through American slaves freed and sent back with the consent of their owners, to their ancestral land, by the efforts of colonization societies, all in

[1] Report and Resolutions New York, May 18, 19, 1836.

[2] *House Journal*, Sess. 1836–7, 134. Stone was a lawyer of Springfield who gave intelligent attention to other things as well as to law and politics, for instance, to the cultivation of catalpa trees, on which he wrote with sense and knowledge. *Sangamo Journal*, Jan. 11, 1834; Aug. 13, 1836.

[3] *House Journal*, Sess. 1836–7, 506–7.

the 'inscrutable wisdom' of Providence. How much better for the slaves such a mission than the fate of emancipated negroes in America! — witness the 'miserable abodes of wretchedness and squalled [*sic*] want' in which such unfortunates now exist.

But where now are the hopes of the philanthropist? Where the gladdening prospects of the slave? Where the energies of those associations which, in reality and not seeming, 'promised release from his manacles'? Abolition societies is the ready 'answer to all.'

Abolition societies 'have forged new irons for the black man and added an hundred fold to the rigors of slavery.

'They have scattered the fire brands of discord and disunion among the . . . States.

'They have excited the most rancorous and embittered feelings of [in] the same community.

'They have aroused the turbulent passions of the monster mob, whose actings are marked by every deed of atrocity' and undiscriminating 'fury.'

'They have . . . pertinaciously insisted on doctrines which . . . would deluge our common country in blood, rend the Union asunder, and bring desolation on all that was won by the valor and hallowed by the blood of our fathers.'

But public opinion, the true corrective, will administer the rebuke 'so richly merited, and allay all further cause of alarm and anxiety.' Citizens of slave States are no more to blame for slavery than citizens of free States; 'it was introduced by our common ancestry and came from them to us with the inviolable charter of our liberty, as a part of our heritage.'

The Constitution, child of 'mutual deference and concession, . . . guarantees to the States where it does exist, its continuance without interference by the National Government; rights . . . not surrendered by the States at the formation of the constitution cannot now be wrested from them.'

The people of Illinois will not submit to the open violation of our national compact, 'have a deep regard and affection for our brethren of the South,' and, upon any proper occasion, 'would fly to their assistance;' but since there are few, if any, abolition

societies in Illinois,[1] 'a decided expression of public opinion is all that is at this time demanded.'

So the Committee recommends the adoption of resolutions that the General Assembly of Illinois 'highly disapprove the formation of abolition societies, and of the doctrines promulgated by them;' that 'the right of property in slaves, is [made] sacred to the slave-holding States by the Federal Constitution,' of which right 'they cannot be deprived . . . without their consent;' that 'the General Government cannot abolish slavery in the District of Columbia, against the consent of the citizens of said District without a manifest breach of faith.' [2]

After debate and much parliamentary manœuvering, the whole subject was referred to a select Committee of five with McClernand as Chairman, who, after several days, reported the resolutions with amendments; and to that against abolition in the District of Columbia, Lincoln moved to add 'unless the people of the said District petition for the same,' which was rejected without roll-call, neither Lincoln nor anybody else demanding the ayes and noes. On Friday, January 20, 1837, the resolutions as amended, were finally adopted by more than twelve to one, seventy-seven members voting aye and only six voting no, Lincoln among them.[3]

Not until six weeks later, Friday, March 3, 1837, was a protest against the passage of these resolutions presented. It was signed by Dan Stone and A. Lincoln, and, without comment, was spread upon the Journal of the House. They declared that 'they believe that the institution of slavery is founded on both injustice and bad policy, but that the promulgation of abolition doctrines tends rather to increase than abate its evils; . . . [that] Congress . . . has no power under the constitution to interfere with the institution of slavery in the different States,' but does have 'the power, under the constitution, to abolish slavery in the District of Columbia,' which power, however, 'ought not to be exercised, unless at the request of the people of the District;' and that 'difference between these opinions and those

[1] In 1835 an anti-slavery society was formed in Putnam County.

[2] *House Journal*, Sess. 1836–7, 241–4.

[3] *Ib.*, 244, 248–9, 309, 311.

contained in the said resolutions is their reason for entering this protest.' [1]

Thus when Lincoln was scarcely twenty-eight years old, the entire subject of slavery came directly before him, and was debated thoroughly by men of high standing. He studied the Southern view as presented by memorials and resolutions drawn with utmost care by the ablest men in various slave-holding States — the crisp demand of Virginia, the appealing request of Alabama, the spirited statement of Kentucky, the peremptory call of Mississippi. He pored over the well-written reply of Connecticut, the evasive answer of New York, the curious response of Illinois.

The origin and development of slavery, the unhappy effect of abolition propaganda on the improving condition of the slaves, the nature and extent of free speech and press, the constitutional powers of Congress — all were, maturely and with leisurely deliberation, considered by Lincoln during the winter of 1837, and he finally stated his conclusions, from which he did not vary for more than a quarter of a century. The only real point of difference between his views and those of the majority of the House was moral — the 'injustice' of slavery. As to the Abolitionists, no member disapproved of them more strongly than he.

If Lincoln and Stone held the opinions expressed in their protest before the belated time they filed it, they were not without reasons of practical politics for their delay. They were intent upon securing the permanent location of the State capital at Springfield. Nothing must interfere with that supreme purpose, no member be offended unnecessarily, no risk hazarded of losing a single vote without urgent cause. Not until after that matter had been settled, did they submit their views on the slavery question. It cannot be stated too often, that Lincoln subordinated everything to Springfield's interest.[2]

While these discussions on national affairs, so vital to Lincoln's political development, were in progress, the Legislature

[1] *House Journal*, Sess. 1836–7, 817–8; Lincoln, *Works*, I, 51.

[2] 'He declined to antagonize men or measures and thus it is we can see nothing striking in his protest against the abolition resolutions which makes a statement and then, as though afraid of it, he backs off like the crab.' Stevens, 306–7.

was also busy with the expansive project of internal improvements. Early in the session Douglas had presented a plan for a great central railroad through the whole length of the State from north to south, two other roads from east to west, together with the immediate construction of the canal from Lake Michigan to the Illinois River, all to be 'constructed and owned by the State exclusively;' and providing for the making of surveys and estimates of other works.[1] But the clamor for internal improvements which, by now, was sweeping the whole State, was not stilled by undertakings so limited; and, even before the questions of slavery, free press, and abolition were disposed of, petitions began to pour into the Legislature, demanding that a general improvement system be provided by law.

An Internal Improvement State Convention had been held in Vandalia at the beginning of the session.[2] Indeed this 'convention,' which was more like an organized lobby, had met in the hall of the House immediately after its first adjournment. Delegates from nearly all counties in the State were there. Thomas Mather, President of the State Bank at Springfield, was chosen President of the convention, which 'after two days' debate and deliberation passed resolutions instructing the Legislature to pass a comprehensive system of internal improvements, involving the building of innumerable roads and deepening and widening of countless streams; and, to accomplish all this, to issue and sell ten million dollars of State bonds.[3] Pressure from a numerous lobby was insistent and effective.[4]

On January 9, 1837, the Committee on Internal Improvements made an elaborate report ardently supporting the plan —

[1] *House Journal*, Sess. 1836–7, 36. *Illinois State Register*, Dec. 23, 1836, reporting House proceedings of Dec. 14. And see *Douglas:* Johnson, 31.

[2] *House Journal*, Sess. 1836–7, 134, 204. The *Sangamo Journal*, Nov. 19, 1836, strongly urged the holding of this convention. A big meeting to insist on an internal improvement law was held in Springfield, Nov. 19, and feverish letters demanding the adoption of the scheme were published. *Ib.*, and Dec. 3, 1836.

[3] Robert L. Wilson to Herndon, Feb. 10, 1866. Weik MSS. Wilson was a representative from Sangamon County in this Legislature. He lived at Athens not far from New Salem and was closely associated with Lincoln.

Mather's State Bank was the fiscal agent of the State and, of course, would handle the sale of the State bonds.

[4] On his return from Congress in 1836 Governor John Reynolds had found the 'people perfectly *insane* on the subject of improvements.' Reynolds, 324.

the people demand it, the nation expects it, immigration will stop if it is not adopted. Prior survey and estimate of costs are unnecessary in view of the topography of the State, its water courses, its level and boundless prairies. Let eight million dollars at once be borrowed on the credit of Illinois; and let work be started without delay on the larger rivers, and the two great railways advocated by Douglas. All this will increase population, add value to property, induce prosperity. Look at Pennsylvania, New York, Indiana.[1]

But the House was not content with the bill which the Committee presented with its report. Public meetings were being held throughout the State; [2] soon counties in increasing numbers began to insist upon their share of the improvements — 'every member wanted a road to his county town;' [3] and, to get votes of members from counties where such work was manifestly impossible, the convenient device was adopted of paying each of such counties two hundred thousand dollars in cash. In such fashion was enacted the Illinois Internal Improvement law of 1837.

The expense caused no apprehension to these optimists. John Hogan of Alton scoffed at the few doubting members. 'Our bonds would go like hot cakes, and be sought for by the Rothschilds and Baring Brothers, and others of that stamp,' at a premium of from fifty to one hundred per cent; the premium alone will construct most of the great works, the principal will go into the treasury and 'leave the people free from taxation for years to come.' [4] With the impatience of confidence, the Vandalia press insisted on immediate action.[5]

'I have heard it proved,' relates Governor Ford, 'by an ingenius orator in the lobby, that the State could well afford to borrow a hundred millions of dollars, and expend it in making internal improvements.' It was supposed, of course, that the bonds of Illinois would bring a premium of at least ten per cent.[6] Yet some obstinate members would not be satisfied. Alpheus

[1] *House Journal*, Sess. 1836–7, 202–15; Ford, 187; Reynolds, 324.
[2] *Illinois State Register*, Jan. 6, 1837.
[3] Linder, 59.
[4] *Ib.*, 59–60.
[5] *Illinois State Register*, Jan. 20, 1837.
[6] Ford, 185, 190.

Wheeler of Pike County insisted upon counting the cost; it was fantastic, this building of railroads upon imagination, this making of waterways 'where nature never attempted it;' how senseless to tax people who cannot, as yet, even support their families.[1] But protests, warnings, black prophesies were unheeded.

Debate was unceasing. McClernand spoke ably for Douglas's plan,[2] and for the Alton-Shawneetown railroad.[3] But Lincoln would take no part; with one exception, he spoke on purely local matters.[4] The Sangamon delegation, testifies one of Lincoln's colleagues, voted on every proposition in exchange for promises of support in the fight over the removal of the capital.[5] The session became one of barter and deal, a debauch of log-rolling. Nor was this practice confined to efforts of the 'Long Nine' to get votes for Springfield: 'members often support measures that they would not otherwise vote for, to obtain another member's vote for a friend,' wrote John J. Hardin of Morgan County.[6]

The capital of the State Bank at Springfield was increased by two million dollars, that at Shawneetown by one million, the stock to be taken by the State.[7] Members were eager for places on boards and commissions which they themselves were creating. The people along the canal were threatened with the loss of it, if other parts of the State were denied improvements. Alton was given three railroads to get her powerful support. No pledge, no threat, no manner of manipulation was overlooked. Through this maze, the 'Long Nine' made their sure and skilful way, to the one objective they were determined to reach.[8]

At last the Internal Improvement Act was passed,[9] providing not only for the Illinois Central Railway and for the great canal,

[1] *Illinois State Register*, Jan. 12, 1837.

[2] *Semi-Weekly Illinois Register*, Jan. 24, 1837.

[3] *Ib.*, March 17, 1837. [4] Linder, 58.

[5] Robert L. Wilson to Herndon, Feb. 10, 1866. Weik MSS.

[6] Hardin to *Jacksonville Patriot* as quoted in *Illinois State Register*, Dec. 29, 1836.

[7] *Frontier State:* Pease, 306.

[8] For a vivid and accurate account of this curious event, see Ford, 184–7.

[9] *House Journal*, Sess. 1836–7, 674–6. Lincoln demanded the ayes and noes. The vote was sixty-two ayes to twenty-two nays, Lincoln voting aye.

Douglas voted for this 'omnibus bill' with great reluctance (Johnson, 31–2) and only under instructions from his County. *Autobiography*, 21.

but also for a multitude of short railways from and to places of no importance,[1] for the dredging and deepening of shallow rivers and creeks, all without connection or any sort of system. The jubilant lobby loudly applauded the passage of the bill.[2] In the streets of Vandalia bonfires blazed, fire-balls were thrown, windows illuminated, huzzahs resounded.[3] The press glowed with optimistic editorials. 'If the present Legislature had done no more they would have deserved the thanks of the People for the passage of this law.'[4] Thus the whole State, declares Governor Ford, writing from personal observation and first-hand knowledge, was 'bought up and bribed, to approve the most senseless and disastrous policy which ever crippled the energies of a growing country.'[5]

Governor Duncan and the Counsel of Revision disapproved the reckless measure. Futile precaution! The bill was contemptuously passed over their veto.[6] Lincoln's ardent friend, Edwin B. Webb of White County, and his colleague, John McCown, filed a long, bitter, and very able protest which was published in the Vandalia papers.[7] But the deed was done, the foresighted and prudent were in disfavor; and Lincoln, with votes pledged for Springfield, went happily to the contest over the location of the State capital, for which struggle he was now, for the first time, prepared.

Several times during the session the subject had arisen and much heat had been shown. Silent as he was on other matters, the discussion of which by him might have alienated possible votes for Springfield, Lincoln was quick to assail those who

[1] Only one of these roads was built. Ford, 189; Reynolds, 325.

[2] *Illinois State Register*, Feb. 2, 1837. [3] *Sangamo Journal*, March 4, 1837.

[4] *Illinois State Register*, March 6, 1837.

[5] Ford, 187. Just before the final votes on the Internal Improvement bill, Lincoln reported from the Finance Committee, as required by a House Resolution, the receipts and estimates of the State government: 'amount receivable from all sources, $57,895.15; and amount required, $55,151.95,' to which should be added $15,000 for an increase of the contingent fund, or $70,151.97 (*sic*) as the total State budget for 1837, leaving a deficit of $12,256.82. *House Journal*, Sess. 1836–7, 603–4.

[6] *Ib.*, 720–1, 724. The vote was fifty-three ayes, twenty noes, Lincoln voting aye. And see Ford, 189; Reynolds, 324.

[7] *House Journal*, Sess. 1836–7, 680–3; *Illinois State Register*, March 1, 1837. John J. Hardin also opposed this internal improvement scheme and, at the time of its adoption, foretold its certain collapse. Linder, 61.

sought, in any way, to disparage that town. Thus is partly explained his remarkable speech against the investigation of the State Bank which had been located at the place where Lincoln was about to go to practise law and politics. On January 7, Linder offered sweeping resolutions for a legislative examination of the Bank's conduct and affairs, in well-nigh every conceivable particular. The resolutions were aggressively hostile to the Bank, its officers and agents.[1] Four days later the subject was taken up, Lincoln twice voting against considering it.[2]

Lincoln led the defence of the Bank. The Bank was constitutional, he said; the Supreme Court of the State had so decided. Even if it were not constitutional, an investigating committee could not remedy that fatal defect. One third of Linder's resolutions related to the distribution of Bank stock by the State Commission; but the only question which could arise from that was one 'between capitalists in regard to the ownership of stock.' Ought the Legislature to 'squander thousands of the people's money,' to settle such a controversy?

Suppose the Bank has made business connections with banks in other States, is there any harm in it? The Bank's charter contemplated that very thing. And suppose the Bank's employees did take an oath of secrecy? What of it? No honest man cares? Such an oath was not forbidden by the Bank's by-laws. 'Does not every merchant have his secret mark? and who is ever silly enough to complain of it?'

As to the charge that the conduct of the Bank had injured the people, it was strange that the people 'are not sensible of it.' Let them request an investigation, 'and I shall ever stand ready to respond to the call.' The Bank had doubled the prices of farmers' products, 'filled their pockets with a sound circulating medium,' and the attack upon the Bank was 'exclusively the work of politicians; a set of men who have interests aside from the interests of the people, and who, to say the most of them, are, taken as a mass, at least one long step removed from honest men.' Lincoln meant nothing personal, he added, 'being a politician myself.'

Suppose the Bank had 'loaned money at usurious rates of

[1] *House Journal*, Sess. 1836–7, 195–8. [2] *Ib.*, 235–6.

interest?' Could the Committee 'redress the injured individuals?' His remedy was in the courts; let him look to 'the laws of the land.' Usury was 'much more frequent and enormous,' before than since the Bank was established. If the Bank had refused specie payments, it had violated its charter; but that could not be, since nobody had sued the Bank for the damages which the law provided in such a case. Dared any man say that the Commissioners had been bribed? and would it be easier to bribe them — 'twenty-four of the most respectable men in the State' — than to bribe '*any* seven members' of the House, constituting an investigating committee? — a point which Lincoln thrice repeats, with particularly severe reference to Linder.

The Legislature had as much right 'to compel the Bank to bring its coffers to this hall and to pour their contents upon this floor, as to compel it to submit to this examination. . . . I am by no means the special advocate of the Bank;' he had long thought that it should 'report its condition to the General Assembly,' and, at the last session he offered such an amendment to the Bank bill, but the House had rejected it.

Of course 'cases might occur when an examination might be proper;' but no such case had occurred, and, if it had, 'I should still be opposed to making an examination without legal authority. I am opposed to encouraging that lawless and mobocratic spirit, whether in relation to the Bank or anything else, which is already abroad in the land, and is spreading with rapid and fearful impetuosity to the ultimate overthrow of every institution, of even [every] moral principle, in which persons and property have hitherto found security.'

Even if the House had authority, what good can come from an investigation of the Bank? None at all. So 'why spend the public money in such employment?' To be sure the credit of the Bank would be injured. But whom would that hurt? The stock holders? No, for 'they are men of wealth . . . and consequently, beyond the power of malice.' Only the 'honest and unsuspecting farmer and mechanic' will suffer by depreciation of the Bank's paper, which they have innocently taken.[1]

[1] *Works*, I, 19–34.

Soon after Lincoln's speech, Linder was elected by the Legislature Attorney General

The president, officers, agents, and attorneys of the Bank were on the ground, and also the 'twenty-four most respectable men in the State' who had apportioned the Bank stock, and whom Lincoln had named personally when paying tribute to them.[1] Not only were they highly regarded but they were the most energetic, resourceful, and substantial men in Illinois. And all of them were Whigs, indeed the Bank was popularly known as the Whig concern.[2] In no possible manner could the young representative from Sangamon, and soon-to-be-lawyer at Springfield, have more quickly secured the approval, confidence, and attachment of these financial leaders, as well as of all business men of substance and standing in the State, than by his adroit but bold attack upon the proposed legislative investigation of the Bank of Illinois.

The Democratic organ denounced the Bank lobby: Its movements from the first day of the session were 'more than suspicious. The President of the Bank . . . and a large body of the officers and stockholders . . . have been hovering around the Legislature for the last three or four weeks; and when the searching investigation proposed by Mr. Linder was under consideration, every means which ingenuity could devise were used to defeat it in the House. These means were successful. If such be the conduct and power of this institution in the green tree, what will it be in the dry? Its officers and stockholders, although the Bank has not existed two years, already form a powerful body in the Legislature, and . . . the period is not distant when it must have possession of the Legislature. Are the People prepared to give up the temple of their power into the keeping of a monied aristocracy?' [3]

Springfield appreciated Lincoln's efforts in behalf of her pet institution. Lincoln carefully wrote out his speech and sent it to the *Sangamo Journal* which, of course, published it in full, with this editorial tribute: 'Mr. Lincoln's remarks on Mr. Linder's

of Illinois. *House Journal*, Sess. 1836–7, 273–5. He resigned as a member of the House, Feb. 11, 1837. *Ib.*, 589.

[1] *Illinois State Register*, Jan. 24, 1837. Several months before the Legislature convened, the State Bank of Illinois (the Springfield institution) had opened a branch at Vandalia. *Illinois Advocate*, Jan. 16, 1836.

[2] Ford, 178–9. [3] *Illinois State Register*, Jan. 24, 1837.

Bank resolution, in this paper, are quite to the point. Our friend carries the true Kentucky rifle, and when he fires seldom fails of sending the shot home.' [1] Soon he was to fire another shot, which, while not verbal, was to bring down far bigger game to be carried to Springfield by him in much greater triumph.

Finally Linder offered a substitute to his prolix and drag-net resolutions, that a committee of the House examine 'the affairs and condition' of the Bank and its branches. To this Hardin moved an amendment that a joint committee inquire whether the Bank had forfeited its charter or abused its privileges, and whether the Bank was constitutional and a safe depository of public funds. Lincoln voted for Hardin's amendment, which, however, was rejected. Lincoln then moved to strike from Linder's substitute authority to inquire into the 'organization' of the Bank. The motion was lost by a vote of forty-four to thirty-four.[2]

On motions to adjourn, calls of the House and divisions of the question, Lincoln voted with friends of the Bank of whom, clearly, he was a leader. But when, at last, a vote was forced, Linder's substitute was adopted by a vote of sixty-six ayes to twenty-one nays, Lincoln voting nay.[3] Within five years the Bank of Illinois, with a circulation of three millions, was to fail,

[1] *Sangamo Journal*, Jan. 28, 1837. [2] *House Journal*, Sess. 1836–7, 288–91.

[3] *Ib.*, 294. The next day, Thursday, Jan. 19, the House received a Senate resolution for a joint committee 'to examine into the condition and financial concerns of the State Bank of Illinois and whether the Bank has violated its charter . . . with a view of ascertaining whether the said Bank would be a safe and proper depository for the public moneys of this State,' etc. *Ib.*, 296.

The Senate resolution was much like Hardin's amendment; and knowledge that the Senate had adopted it undoubtedly led Linder to offer his substitute.

Almost immediately after the House received the Senate resolutions, Linder's resolution and substitute were laid on the table, by a vote of fifty-five ayes to twenty-eight nays, Lincoln voting nay. *Ib.*, 299–300.

The Senate resolutions were so amended that no officer, agent, attorney, or stockholders of the Bank should be on the investigating committee, Lincoln voting aye; that the investigation include the Bank's officers, Lincoln voting nay; and the branches of the Bank, Lincoln voting nay. *Ib.*, 303–4.

As thus amended the Senate resolutions were adopted by two separate votes, that on the Springfield bank by seventy to ten, Lincoln voting nay; and that on the Shawneetown bank by forty-four to thirty-five, Lincoln again voting nay. *Ib.*, 305–6.

Throughout this contest Douglas voted as steadily against the Bank as Lincoln voted for it.

The Joint Committee promptly examined the Bank and, a month later, made a long and careful report. The Committee said that they 'were satisfied of the soundness

causing profound and widespread distress among the people.[1] Governor Ford denounced the investigations of the two State Banks as mere farces, and one of the Committee to examine the bank at Shawneetown declared that he saw nothing but 'plenty of good liquor in the bank, and sugar to sweeten it with.'[2]

Although Lincoln and the Springfield partisans, of whom he was in command,[3] strove to delay final action on the location of the capital until the passage of the Internal Improvement bill, they could not prevent frequent consideration of that irritating and dangerous subject. Sometimes they were on the very edge of defeat, twice they actually were beaten. His colleagues were despondent, hopeless; but Lincoln never despaired. In the darkest hours he called the 'Long Nine' to his room in the tavern, heartened them, and devised plans for victory.[4]

Seldom has the management of legislative suffrage been cleverer than that of Lincoln in this notable and superheated contest.[5] The Legislature was Democratic, and Whig Springfield was in terror lest partisan politics should defeat her cherished ambition. The *Sangamo Journal*, in a long editorial, insisted that so trivial a thing should not affect a project so noble.[6] It did not — Lincoln had seen to that.

The Senate first passed the bill for the location of the capital by the present Legislature. This was met in the House by volleys of motions to amend, postpone, adjourn, and the like, all of

and safety of the condition of the State Bank;' that the Bank had not violated its charter, had not charged usurious interest, and had 'instantly' redeemed its paper when presented; that the Bank's officers had committed no impropriety, and that the Bank's investments were sound and profitable. 2500 copies of the report were ordered to be printed. *House Journal*, Sess. 1836–7, 616–35.

As it turned out, this report was as careless as it was prolix. When the Bank failed in 1842, it was found that very bad management for a long time was one cause of the collapse, and that some of the biggest and worst loans had been made about the time of this investigation.

[1] Ford, 222–3.

[2] *Ib.*, 197. [3] Stevens, 308.

[4] *House Journal*, Sess. 1836–7, 612–3. *Illinois State Register*, Feb. 10, 1837. Also Robert L. Wilson to Herndon, Feb. 10, 1866. Weik MSS.

[5] Even an amendment to the bill for a repeal of the law was conceded by Lincoln (*Illinois State Register*, July 28, 1837), undoubtedly as one of the manœuvers necessary to get the capital bill passed.

[6] *Sangamo Journal*, Jan. 21, 1837.

which were defeated. So, in the end, the Senate bill was passed,[1] providing that, before adjournment, the Legislature should select, by ballot, the place at which the seat of government should be situated.

On February 28, 1837, six days before adjournment, after three months of management, bargaining, and intrigue, after the passage of the Internal Improvement bill with its clusters of improvident building, impossible improvements of impracticable streams, and appropriations of cash to importunate counties, the General Assembly in joint session chose Springfield as the permanent site of the State capital. On the first ballot she received thirty-five votes — more than twice as many as her next highest competitor, Vandalia; on the second ballot, forty-three votes; on the third, fifty-three votes; on the fourth and last, seventy-three votes, or a majority of all.[2]

The husbandry of the 'Long Nine' in the fields of vote-trading had yielded its harvest. Writing a few years later, just after the collapse of the Internal Improvement scheme, in explanation of the methods used to secure it and the location of the capital, Governor Thomas Ford bitterly concludes: 'Thus it was made to cost the State about six millions of dollars to remove the seat of government from Vandalia to Springfield, half which sum would have purchased all the real estate in that town at three prices.' [3] As we shall presently see, the resentment of this impartial observer was cherished by many others.

[1] *House Journal*, Sess. 136–7, 569–70; 592–4; 608–10; 612–4; 661–6.

Act, Feb. 25, 1837. *Laws*, 1837, 321–2. Among other concessions which Lincoln had to make to get the bill through was a requirement that the citizens of Springfield should donate $50,000 by May, 1837, for the building of the new State House — a concession that caused him some trouble thereafter.

[2] *House Journal*, Sess. 1836–7, 752–8. Examples of Lincoln's other votes at this session are: not to give the Legislature power to repeal or amend the act incorporating Quincy Academy (*ib.*, 147); to refer a divorce bill to the Committee on Petitions (*ib.*, 53); indefinitely to postpone a report of said Committee that Courts and not the Legislature should grant divorces (*ib.*, 62); indefinitely to postpone joint resolutions calling a Convention to amend the Constitution so as to prevent slavery in Illinois (*ib.*, 684–5); and against any Constitutional Convention (*ib.*, 685–6). Also for numerous internal improvement propositions.

Again legislative news in Lincoln's style, as letters from Vandalia, were printed in the *Sangamo Journal*. One of these ridiculing 'Paddy Shields' — James A. Shields, to whom Lincoln had taken a dislike — was almost certainly written by Lincoln. *Sangamo Journal*, Dec. 24, 1836.

[3] Ford, 187.

Five days after he had secured the capital for Springfield and six days after the Internal Improvement law was approved, Lincoln and Stone filed their protest against the slavery resolutions which had been adopted six weeks before.

But Lincoln had won his fight, the greatest of his life thus far, and one decisively influential on his whole future career. For he had determined to live in the new-made capital, city of his dreams, his aspirations, and his hopes. Before this session of the Legislature began Lincoln, on September 9, 1836, applied for a license to practise law; and on March 1, 1837, the very next day after his victory for Springfield in the General Assembly, he procured from the Supreme Court at Vandalia, a certificate of admission to the bar of Illinois and was formally enrolled as an attorney.[1]

Great was the rejoicing in Springfield, when glad tidings of the vote reached town. Not since the arrival of the *Talisman* had there been such jollification. And Lincoln was the hero of the hour. A long editorial in the *Sangamo Journal* [2] praised the Sangamon delegation for having secured the capital; and immediately after the Legislature adjourned, the 'Long Nine' went to Springfield to receive the plaudits of the people. They were welcomed by dinners, speeches, songs, hilarious congratulations. In all these expressions of public gladness Lincoln took part and leading citizens urged him to come to Springfield to live.[3] After the celebration he went out to the cabin hamlet on the Sangamon bluffs, to settle his small affairs and say good-bye to those among whom he had lived for seven years.

The ambitious little town of Springfield throbbed with enterprise. Her victory gave 'new life and energy to our citizens,' proudly declared the *Sangamo Journal.* All knew that they owed their good fortune to the representative from New Salem more than to anybody else. And he was coming to live among

[1] Roll of attorneys admitted by Sup. Ct., Central Grand Division, MSS. Office Clerk Sup. Ct. Ill., Springfield. The date of Lincoln's license is Sept. 9, 1836.

In the Records of the Circuit Court of Sangamon County there is an entry, March 24, 1836, stating that 'It is Ordered by the Court that it be certified that Abraham Lincoln is a person of good moral character.' In July of that year he filed papers in the first suit with which he had connection. *The Real Lincoln.* Jesse W. Weik, 134–8.

[2] March 9, 1837.

[3] Herndon, I, 180.

them. Seldom has a young man gone to any town to make his way, with so many friends awaiting him, as Lincoln found when on an April day in 1837 he rode into Springfield.

'The Empire County' of Illinois, as Sangamon was called because of its great extent and natural wealth, had a population of nearly twenty thousand,[1] and this was speedily increasing. The county seat and prospective capital was only fifteen years old, and for the first decade of its existence had consisted of 'only a few scattered log cabins.'[2] In the last five or six years, however, Springfield had grown prodigiously and, when Lincoln came there to live in the spring of 1837, had well-nigh fifteen hundred people within its limits. It was situated about four miles south of the Sangamon River, on the edge of broad and fertile prairie 'stretching away to the blue line of distant forest;' and this expanse was already filled with well cultivated farms. To the south and west great woods covered the bottoms.

While there were still many log cabins, frame houses, most of them small though some comparatively large, were far more numerous. Six church buildings lifted unassuming spires, two for Presbyterians and Baptists, and one each for Methodists and Episcopalians; and all had resident ministers and 'respectable congregations.' Springfield had schools, too, and boasted an academy. The town spread out from a public square, in the centre of which stood a courthouse and a market, both brick buildings, surrounded by 'a green pleasant lawn inclosed by a railing.' There was also a jail.

The sides of the public square were 'lined with handsome edifices;' and in these or adjacent structures were nineteen dry-goods stores, one wholesale and six retail groceries, four drug stores, two clothing stores and one book-store. Springfield had four hotels, one an extensive three-story brick tavern house, and a casting foundry and four wool-carding machines were the

[1] 17,573 in 1835, State Census, 1835. *House Journal*, Sess. 1835–6, 86; and in 1840, 14,716, U.S. *Census*.

[2] Mitchell, 129. Five years before Lincoln went to Springfield, William Cullen Bryant, who visited the place, described it as being uncommonly poor and unkempt, even for a pioneer village, 'the whole town having an appearance of dirt and discomfort.' It was worse than Jacksonville, which was then a 'horribly ugly village.' Bryant, II, 13–4.

beginnings of industries. Eighteen doctors ministered to the ailing and eleven lawyers served the litigious. Two papers, the *Illinois Republican* and the *Sangamo Journal*, one Democratic, the other Whig and both bitterly partisan, supplied the news and nourished the political prejudices of their readers.[1]

The broad streets were unpaved, no sidewalks led from residences to stores, churches, or schools and in rainy seasons shingles, chunks of wood, and sometimes a stray plank were made use of to prevent walkers from sinking to their shoe-tops in the mire. During wet seasons the wheels of heavily laden wagons went down to their axles in the mud; and in periods of drought the streets were scarcely less deep with dust. There was no street lighting and on moonless nights the town was in darkness, save for the vague radiance of candles shining dimly through windows.

Yet there were in the Springfield of 1837, gaiety and cheer, rich dressing and fine carriages,[2] social activities and creature comforts, literary interests and political aspirings, and all the expressions of cultivated as well as of frontier life. A number of the intellectually active had, long since, formed the Sangamon County Lyceum and debated at its meetings all manner of questions.[3] At the Springfield High School, Latin, Greek, Spanish, and French were taught among other of the higher branches of learning, the charge being '$200 per annum, $50 in advance.' [4]

Such was Springfield when Lincoln went there to live. He came to town riding a horse which he had borrowed. His entire possessions were in two saddle-bags. He engaged a rough bedstead from a cabinet-maker, but had no money for bed furnishings. His poverty depressed him, it seems, in spite of his laurels and bright prospects. 'I never saw so gloomy and melancholy a face in my life,' reports Joshua F. Speed, to whom Lincoln told his financial predicament. So Speed asked Lincoln to share his room over his store — it was a big room with a large double

[1] Mitchell, 129.

[2] 'There is a great deal of flourishing about in carriages here.' Lincoln to Mary Owens, May 7, 1837. *Works*, I, 53.

[3] An advertisement in the *Sangamo Journal*, March 29, 1834, shows that the Springfield Lyceum was in existence at that time.

[4] *Sangamo Journal*, May 6, 1837.

bed.[1] Another good Samaritan, William Butler, Clerk of the Sangamon Circuit Court,[2] who greatly liked and admired the young politician, also observed Lincoln's despondency and took him to his house for meals, making no mention of pay.[3] Thus were arranged his living conditions, which continued for more than four years without a dollar of expense.[4]

Lincoln at once went to the law office of Stuart and Dummer, where he had so often visited on his trips from New Salem to Springfield. As we have seen, he had applied for a license to practise law months before he came to live in Springfield, and he had secured his license immediately after winning the fight for the location of the capital. Obviously details of the partnership had been arranged by Stuart, for, in the paper of April 15, 1837, appeared a formal notice of the dissolution of the partnership between Stuart and Henry E. Dummer, and a new professional card: 'J. T. Stuart & A. Lincoln, Attorneys and Counsellors at Law, will practice, conjointly, in the Courts of this Judicial Circuit. Office No. 4 Hoffman's Row, upstairs, Springfield, April 12, 1837.'[5] The office was above a room in which the circuit court was held, and contained 'a small dirty bed, one buffalo robe, a chair and a bench,'[6] and a small bookcase containing a few legal volumes.[7]

Here, then, was Lincoln, but twenty-eight years old, leader of his party in the House of Representatives, winner of the fight for Springfield as the State capital, most talked of and best liked of all the Whigs of Sangamon County, and now partner of one of the ablest lawyers in Illinois and the foremost Whig in the State. Astounding progress! But yesterday pottering about New Salem in contact only with little things and crude surroundings, heavily in debt and with dim prospects for advancement; to-day starting on the high road of ambition and achievement!

[1] Speed's statement. Herndon, I, 184–5.

[2] Butler had been appointed in 1836, to succeed James H. Matheny, resigned. *Sangamo Journal*, Feb. 6, 1836.

[3] Herndon to Weik, Jan. 15, 1886. Weik MSS.

[4] Herndon, I, 185–6.

[5] *Sangamo Journal*, April 15, 1837.

[6] Statement James H. Matheny, May 3, 1866. Weik MSS.

[7] Herndon, I, 184. Hoffman's Row was on the west side of the present North Fifth Street near Washington Street.

For Lincoln, the year was full of notable incidents. During the summer, Daniel Webster, whom he greatly admired,[1] made a tour of the West and about the middle of June came to Springfield. A mounted company with Captain Merryman as Marshal rode out many miles to meet the great orator and escorted him into the prospective capital. Whigs gathered from all over the County, a barbecue was held in the grove near town, a toast drunk to Webster, who then addressed the throng 'for an hour and a half . . . in a cool, dispassionate and able manner.' He was fair but forthright — never would he support a 'Treasury Bank;' to that experiment was due the present distress of the country. Webster's peroration — stand by the Constitution! — was so impressive that 'the multitude who listened to his appeal,' never forgot it.[2]

Talk of Webster's visit and speech had not subsided before another circumstance happened even more attractive to Springfield, and bringing Lincoln again into the foreground of the town's affections. On July 27, 1837, 'several members of the State Legislature and other distinguished men passing through our town' were given a big dinner as 'a proper tribute of respect' for what had been done for Springfield. The 'sumptuous' banquet, attended by sixty or seventy men, was held at the Rural Hotel and Colonel Spotswood was the host. 'The cloth having been removed, the following toasts were . . . received with great glee:' to Illinois, destined to be 'fairest and tallest among the sisters of this great Republic;' to the Legislature, whose 'duty has been nobly done;' to O. H. Browning,[3] whose monument will be the new capitol; to 'the "Long Nine of Old Sangamon" — well done good and faithful servants;' to Archibald Williams, 'clear in head and firm in purpose;' to Springfield, 'favorite of our State;' to McClernand, to Southern Illinois,

[1] Joseph Gillespie to Herndon, Jan. 31, 1866. Weik MSS.

[2] *Sangamo Journal*, June 24, 1837, reporting the meeting held on the previous Monday. Dr. Arnold Naudain, recently United States Senator from Delaware, arrived from the East on the same day. He, too, made a speech — his high expectations of Illinois had been surpassed by the reality and he probably would come there to live (cheers). Webster left Springfield the next morning 'for the north' and returned home by way of the Lakes.

[3] Browning had introduced the seat of Government bill.

to Northern Illinois, to the people of Illinois, to Internal Improvements, to everybody and everything, and particularly 'to our absent friends . . . who stood by us in our time of need.' Music and cheers greeted the toasts to Browning and Williams; and, responding, Browning said that the Sangamon delegation deserved credit for Springfield's victory.

Finally, when the twenty-two regular toasts had been drunk, many volunteer toasts were offered, of which the reporter could remember only a dozen. One among them was by Lincoln: 'All our friends — they are too numerous to be now named individually, while there is no one of them who is not too dear to be forgotten or neglected.' [1]

Thus merrily sped Lincoln's first months in Springfield, song and cheer and great occasion pleasingly interrupting the no less engaging game of politics which, from the first, he played incessantly and joyously. Stuart's whole thought was given to his ambition to go to Congress. He was determined to win next year and no detail must be overlooked in the ensuing months. Lincoln attended to practically all the business of the firm. Lucky for him that board and lodging cost him nothing, for the fees were few and trifling. The account book, kept by Lincoln, a provident habit which he abandoned as soon as possible, shows only five fees from April, 1837, to October, 1838, one for two dollars and fifty cents, two for five dollars, one for ten dollars and one, a 'chancery case' of fifty dollars, fifteen dollars of which was paid by furnishing a coat for Stuart.[2] The infrequency and smallness of these fees are striking in view of the fact that Stuart and Lincoln had more cases of record in the Circuit Court of Sangamon County than any other lawyer or firm of lawyers.[3]

[1] Douglas also proposed one of the remembered toasts: 'The last winter's Legislation — may its results prove no less beneficial to the whole State than they have to our town.' Stephen T. Logan gave by far the most sensible toast of the day, although it could not have been popular on that occasion or anywhere at that time: 'The System of Internal Improvements adopted by the late Legislature — the best mode of rearing it to perfection would be a liberal pruning of the superfluous branches.' One by Col. Spotswood was prophetic: 'Com. Alex. J. Dallas. He possesses every characteristic of the American officer. He has humbled the priest-ridden Government of Mexico, and she cries "peccavi."' *Sangamo Journal*, July 29, 1837.

[2] One page of this account book is owned by Jesse W. Weik of Greencastle, Ind.

[3] In the July term, 1837, Stuart and Lincoln had nineteen common law cases on the

In addition to this local business, Lincoln immediately began to attend court in the other counties of the circuit.[1]

But, like his partner, Lincoln was more interested in politics than in law, and he found it hard to confine himself to the firm's office. His real headquarters were the room where the *Sangamo Journal* was written and printed. He knew Simeon Francis, the editor, better, perhaps, than anybody else in Springfield except Speed and Stuart; and during the years that he had contributed to the *Journal*, Francis had become fond of him. Now that he was acknowledged to be one of the cleverest politicians in the General Assembly, high in the counsels of the party, regarded by his colleagues to be a coming man, and, above all, partner of the great Stuart, the editor of the Whig organ trusted Lincoln more than ever. In time Lincoln became so influential with Francis that he was said to have controlled the columns of the *Journal*. Douglas, then Register of the Land Office at Springfield, was equally constant in attendance at the office of the Democratic paper, the *Illinois Republican*, and as dominant over its policy.

Hardly had Lincoln become settled in Springfield when he got into a quarrel which, before it was finished, attracted the amused attention of the whole State. Since it involved the first law case of general interest he ever had and is connected with the longest political newspaper controversy he ever personally

docket of the Sangamon Circuit Court mostly in assumpsit, the amounts involved ranging from $20.50 to $1000 with an average of $500; while Logan and Baker represented ten, the next highest number of common law cases. Stuart and Lincoln had seven chancery cases at the same term and Logan and Baker had only one. Docket Book I, Circuit Court, Sangamon Co., Ill.

At the October term, 1837, Stuart and Lincoln had twenty common law cases and Logan and Baker eleven; and five chancery cases; while Logan and Baker had none. *Ib.*

In the March term, 1838, Stuart and Lincoln had thirty-three common law cases and Logan and Baker twenty-three; in chancery seven to four. *Ib.*

The proportion of cases of these two firms continues practically unchanged until 1839, when Logan and Baker passed their competitor. But in the July term, 1839, Stuart and Lincoln's common law cases rose to thirty-four to fourteen for Logan and Baker. *Ib.*

Treat sprang to the front almost immediately after he came to Springfield, having twenty-three common law cases at the March term, 1838, twenty-four at the July term and forty-six at the October term of 1838, together with twenty-three more as associate of Campbell. *Ib.*

[1] In Bloomington, 1837. Statement of David Davis, no date. Weik MSS.

engaged in, a brief statement of this strange tangle of incidents cannot be avoided.

In May, 1837, Mary Anderson and her son Richard, widow and son of Joseph Anderson deceased, came to Springfield from Fulton County where they lived, to get possession of and sell ten acres of land near Springfield which they claimed belonged to them as heirs of the deceased husband and father. They found the land occupied by the former attorney of Anderson, General James Adams, who claimed title to it through deeds and other documents of record. He refused, of course, to give the land to the Anderson heirs.

Mrs. Anderson and her son then asked Lincoln to recover the land for them. The young attorney examined the records, and finding features of them which aroused his suspicions, sent the Recorder, Benjamin Talbott, to Adams' house for the original deeds which were delivered to Talbott by Adams' son. The Recorder compared them with the copies in his office and found that the copyist had made the mistake observed by Lincoln, the originals being regular and perfect. This fact Talbott reported to Lincoln, who again unfolded the deeds for re-examination, when, as he asserted, a paper fell out, which appeared to be an assignment by Anderson to Adams of a judgment; but, according to Lincoln, this document, which Anderson had signed by his mark, was dated several months before the judgment and was, moreover, in the handwriting of Adams and freshly written.[1]

This and other circumstances convinced Lincoln, he said, that the assignment, upon which the title of Adams ultimately rested, was a forgery, and he agreed to bring suit for the recovery of the land. He engaged Stephen T. Logan, leader of the Sangamon County bar and later to become his partner, to assist in the litigation. He then wrote out a contract for a contingent fee, which on May 26, 1837, the widow and her son signed, Mrs. Anderson by her mark:

'Whereas the heirs of Joseph Anderson deceased are about to commence an action in chancery in the Sangamon Circuit Court, for the recovery of a certain piece of ground (describing the land

[1] *Works*, 1, 58–64.

in controversy); and whereas, Stephen T. Logan, John T. Stuart and A. Lincoln have engaged to prosecute the suit as attorneys for the said heirs, we, the subscribers, being the widow and one of the sons of the said Anderson deceased, agree to give to said Logan, Stuart and Lincoln one-half of the said piece of ground for their services, provided they recover the same; but are not bound to pay anything unless the said piece of ground be recovered.' [1]

Thereupon, June 22, 1837, Lincoln and Stuart, together with Logan and Baker, filed suit against Adams for the recovery of the land, averring that it was now worth two thousand dollars and alleging that his title had been procured by fraud.[2] Adams promptly filed his sworn answer stating the manner in which he had acquired the land and asserting that the charges of fraud against him were 'little less than a tissue of misrepresentations.' Later Adams filed with the court what he claimed to be the original assignment to him by Anderson of the judgment, to which assignment Anderson's name was signed in writing.[3]

Here this celebrated case rested until October 17, when Lincoln and Logan filed a replication.[4] Meanwhile, a curious newspaper warfare, in which politics and the law suit were inextricably blended, had begun and for a long time continued to be waged between Lincoln and Adams, Lincoln being the aggressor.

[1] Lincoln MSS., Illinois State Historical Society.

[2] The land was worth but $30 in 1827 and the value of $2000 stated in the bill was the not uncommon exaggeration of the pleader. The ten-acre plot was 'a rough, untillable piece of timber, lying almost two miles from the State House in the hills upon which Oak Ridge Cemetery was subsequently located,' and the report of the Executors of Adams filed April 5, 1854, states that this specific ten acres was sold for $100 to one, Lewis, who, a year later, sold it for $175. In 1860 it was sold for $2400 and a slaughter house built upon it. Wm. L. Patton to author, March 18, 1925, citing Court and Deed records, Springfield, Ill.

It is curious that the bill itself is in three separate and distinct handwritings of which but six and one half lines — the description of the land by metes and bounds — are that of Lincoln, although there are eight pages of the bill. The signatures of the four solicitors for the complainant, obviously written by the same hand, are somewhat like that of Lincoln, but much bolder. Wright *et al. vs.* Adams. MS. Files Clerk Circuit Court, Sangamon County.

The bill shows that it was the composite product of three lawyers working together at the same time. In view of the political features of the case and of the outcome of the litigation, the inference cannot be avoided that local party politics had much to do with it.

[3] July 5, 1837. Record C, 421. [4] *Ib.*, 497.

Indeed the newspaper attack upon Adams began before the suit was brought against him.

A special election for certain county officers was to be held in August, and Adams was the Democratic candidate for Probate Judge, Dr. A. G. Henry, being the Whig candidate. The whole campaign appears to have centred about the contest for this office, and the Whigs were plainly alarmed at the popular strength of the Democratic candidate. Adams was one of the oldest settlers of Springfield, a frontier lawyer and very popular.[1] For three months the usual political charges and countercharges had been made by the organs of the two parties.

At this point Lincoln gave rein to his gift for writing anonymous letters to the press, which five years afterwards was to get him into serious trouble. On June 24, two days after Lincoln filed in court the suit against Adams, the *Sangamo Journal* printed a letter from 'Fork Prairie' signed 'Sampson's Ghost,' asking Adams to 'just tell the people' how he got the land in Springfield on which he was living. Vague insinuation was made that his title rested on a forged document, the inference being that the heirs of Sampson's Ghost were the rightful owners.[2]

The day after the suit was brought against Adams, another Sampson's Ghost letter appeared in the *Journal*, intimating that Adams had been disloyal in the War of 1812, and again asking

[1] Adams was fifty-four years old at this time, having been born in Hartford, Conn., Jan. 24, 1783. He had been Justice of the Peace at Springfield since 1823 and was a veteran of the Winnebago and Black Hawk Wars of 1827, 1831, and 1832. *Early Settlers of Sangamon County:* John Carroll Power, 76.

Just before the period of partisanship, in the *Sangamo Journal*, June 14, 1834, 'Many Voters' endorsed Adams as a candidate for Governor, and he immediately published a card, accepting the suggestion. *Ib.*, June 21, 1834. However, Adams' candidacy appears not to have gone beyond Sangamon County; but see *Illinois Election Returns:* Pease, under Adams.

[2] *Sangamo Journal*, June 24, 1837. This land was not the same tract for the recovery of which Lincoln, as attorney for the Anderson heirs, sued Adams; but the Sampson's Ghost charges are interwoven with the Anderson suit by identity of time, and by direct reference to that litigation.

Sampson's Ghost was not the restless spirit of the departed Anderson, however, but of one, Sampson, deceased, who seems to have once owned another piece of land in the town itself on which Adams lived. Adams' title to the Sampson land appears to have been a matter of speculation. Lincoln seized upon that fact in his newspaper attacks on Adams.

Sampson's sister lived in Philadelphia, and more than four years after the Ghost letters were published, William Primrose, an attorney of that city, wrote Logan and

about the title to the land.[1] Adams had answered the first Sampson's Ghost letter declaring that his title was 'of record, open to all persons;' but, said the Ghost in reply, would records disclose forgery? If Adams would explain his title and the people should then elect him, 'I will acknowledge that Sampson never owned one foot of ground in Springfield.' [2]

In such fashion Sampson's Ghost rose to attack Adams again and again in the Whig newspaper, and Adams replied in the Democratic newspaper,[3] charging that a group of Whig lawyers at Springfield had conspired to ruin him. Just before the election, an unsigned handbill, written by Lincoln, was circulated giving a precise account of the discovery of Adams' alleged fraud and explaining how the case against him had come into the hands of Stuart and Lincoln.[4]

Adams won at the polls, however, by a majority of almost two to one, and in the places where Lincoln's attacks were expected to hurt Adams most he overwhelmed the Whig candidate, New Salem going for Adams by a majority of nearly five to one and Petersburg casting but eight votes for Henry to one hundred and sixteen for Adams.[5] The Democratic organ was exultant, the Whig paper angry and humiliated.[6] Then Adams published in

Lincoln to settle with Adams for half the value of the property, or to bring suit against him for the recovery of it. Primrose to Stephen T. Logan and A. Lincoln, Phila., Sept. 1, 1841. MS. in possession of Logan Hay, Springfield, Ill. Logan and Lincoln did not answer and Primrose wrote them again, Jan. 8, 1842 (*ib.*); but nothing whatever was done in the matter. Seemingly Lincoln wanted no further trouble with Adams after his encounter in the Court with that stubborn fighter.

[1] In his subsequent newspaper controversy with Adams, in which Lincoln signs his own name, he says that: 'Gen. Adams himself, in reply to the Sampson's Ghost story, was the *first man* that raised the cry of *toryism* and it was only by way of set off, and never in seriousness that it was banded back to him.' Lincoln's reply to Adams, Sept. 9, 1837. *Works*, I, 65–75.

Even if this admission that he wrote the Sampson's Ghost letters had not been made, Lincoln's authorship of them is established by conclusive circumstantial evidence. The style of the letters is unmistakably that of Lincoln at that time in his life; the letters appeared immediately before and after he filed the suit against Adams, made reference to points in it, and were continued until the election.

[2] *Sangamo Journal*, July 8, 1837.

[3] Three more Sampson's Ghost letters, an editorial and another anonymous letter, dated '1st Monday in August,' were published before the election (*ib.*, July 15, 22, 29, 1837), all of them obviously written by Lincoln. Only in the last Sampson's Ghost letter is mention made of the suit filed against Adams by Lincoln's clients.

[4] *Works*, I, 58–64.

[5] *Sangamo Journal*, Aug. 12, 1837.

[6] *Ib.*

the *Journal*, his answer to Lincoln's pre-election unsigned handbill; and, in the same issue, just below Adams' reply, the *Journal* printed the handbill with the statement that Lincoln was the author of it.[1]

For months after the election, the warfare raged in the press, Adams voluminously stating his side in the *Republican* and Lincoln, over his own signature, replying at length and minutely in the *Journal* — Adams' statements are 'false as hell,' his son Lucian swears to a 'falsehood,' Miller, a witness, and a party to the extensive transaction, has been 'tampered with' and testifies to an untruth, the charge of toryism in the Sampson's Ghost letters had merely been 'banded back' to Adams.[2] Adams vehemently denied any wrongdoing and fiercely asserted that if Lincoln and his friends had ever seen such a paper as the assignment described by Lincoln, it was a forgery gotten up by them to beat Adams at the polls, win their wicked law suit, get his land, and break down his reputation. Meanwhile other anonymous attacks upon Adams, signed 'An Old Settler,' were published in the *Journal*, plainly written by Lincoln.[3] Finally even Stephen T. Logan got into the papers because, in one of his answers to Lincoln, Adams had attacked Logan. After a hot rejoinder, Logan announced that he would sue Adams for libel.[4]

So filled were the Whig and Democratic papers of Springfield with the Lincoln-Adams quarrel, that the matter got into State

[1] *Works*, I, 57–64, Aug. 19, 1837. In the various editions of Lincoln's *Works* no mention is made of this letter by Adams in reply to the handbill and printed with it in the *Journal*. Four affidavits sustaining Lincoln's contention are also printed in the same issue just below Adams' letter.

[2] *Ib.*, 65–76, Sept. 9; 76–87, Oct. 28, 1837.

[3] *Sangamo Journal*, Sept. 30, Oct. 7, Oct. 14, 1837. In one of these is printed a letter of Elijah Iles recounting the circumstances of Adams' wrong-doing toward Iles in another land transaction. Old Settler closes his letter by saying that Adams' 'duplicity shall not be covered over by the mantle of religion.'

[4] *Sangamo Journal*, Oct. 28, 1837. Benj. Talbott, the County Recorder, also published a long letter against Adams. *Ib.*, Nov. 4, 1837.

Logan filed his complaint in the Sangamon Circuit Court, but on July 7, 1837, it was removed to Schuyler County on motion of Adams based on the prejudice of the judge. The case was finally dismissed by agreement at Adams' costs, April 5, 1841, upon Adams' statement of record that 'he never intended to charge the plaintiff with forgery, etc.' Records Schuyler County Cir. Ct., April, 1841. Douglas was Judge of the Court in these proceedings.

politics.[1] The *Journal* was 'caused some pain' by the political attacks upon it, and in self-defence secured a transcript of an indictment for forgery against Adams when he lived in Oswego County, New York.[2] Adams, said the *Journal*, had left that State 'while an indictment for forgery was hanging over his head.'[3] So let the Democrats cease their scoffing, ridicule, and abuse.

In the end nothing came of this political and legal controversy. Adams was twice re-elected Probate Judge and died in office, August 11, 1843.[4] The suit against him brought by Lincoln was transferred to Schuyler County, whence it was remanded to Sangamon by Judge Stephen A. Douglas, because he had been 'of counsel' for Adams; depositions were taken, the material part of which was favorable to Adams' title to the land, but the case never was brought to trial; and, on a suggestion of the defendant's death, the suit was abated by the Court, November 29, 1843.[5] So the widow and heirs of James Adams received the land. It would appear, however, that Lincoln was not without grounds for his estimate of Adams' character, though the partisan motive for the entire controversy is undeniable.

While Lincoln was thus unmasking a dishonest man, as he must have believed, though at the same time creating public sentiment favorable to his side of a law suit and weakening an opposing politician, an event came to pass not far away, of

[1] 'A considerable portion of the People of this State are aware of the controversy.' *Sangamo Journal*, Nov. 25, 1837.

'Several of the Van Buren papers in other parts of the State, have united with the party paper here, and have endeavored to turn the current of public opinion against the *Journal*.' *Ib.*

'The Chicago *Democrat* again taunts us with the election of General Adams.' *Ib.*, Dec. 23, 1837.

[2] *Sangamo Journal*, Nov. 25, 1837.

[3] *Ib.*, Dec. 23, 1837.

[4] Power, 76.

[5] Record H., 219. This litigation was very complicated, but the main facts are these: The ten acres involved were entered Nov. 17, 1823, by Joseph Dixon and by him were conveyed to one —— Thomas, Nov. 29, 1825. On Sept. 17, 1825, Joseph Miller gave his promissory note for $27 to Joseph Anderson for this same land, Anderson agreeing to procure Thomas to convey it to Miller, which was done. Deed Book J., Recorder's office, 33–4.

A credit of $1.50 was made on the note, and, by confession, before Adams as Justice of the Peace, Sept. 14, 1826, Anderson secured a judgment against Joseph Miller for $23.67½, with $2 costs; and Adams, on Oct. 14, 1826, issued an execution against Ander-

mighty influence on the destiny of the nation. Once more that thunder rolled over the land which Lincoln had heard three times before; but now the crash was at Alton, Illinois, only sixty miles from Springfield.

When, in 1833, the tide of Southern alarm and resentment and Northern disapproval of Abolition methods and activities was rising, a young Presbyterian minister thirty-two years of age, Elijah Parish Lovejoy, went from Massachusetts to St. Louis and started a religious paper, called the *Observer*. At first he declared against '*immediate and unconditional emancipation*' and criticised the Abolitionists, although he denounced 'slave-drivers.' [1] But he soon grew bolder and, proposing gradual emancipation his subscribers requested him not to discuss slavery in the then excited state of the public mind.[2] Lovejoy grew defiant. He attacked the Catholic Church, also, not because of any connection of that institution with slavery, but as a

son in the Circuit Court of Sangamon County to enjoin the enforcement of this execution; and the injunction was ordered.

October 1, 1827, Adams, as attorney for Anderson, filed an answer, signed and sworn to by Anderson, to Miller's suit for injunction, alleging that he had procured a deed to be executed by Thomas conveying the land to Miller, which deed should be held in escrow by Adams, until Miller paid the judgment. On Oct. 6, 1827, the Court, 'after an inspection of the papers,' dissolved the injunction at Miller's cost. Records Circuit Court, Sangamon County, Book A, 323.

The records do not show any judgment in the Circuit Court against Miller for $25, May 10, 1827, which, with the assignment thereof by Anderson to Adams, Lincoln charged to be a forgery.

On Oct. 1, 1832, Miller conveyed the land to Adams (Deed Book J., Recorder's office, 35) in consideration of the satisfaction of Anderson's judgment against him, which, as Adams claimed, Anderson had assigned to Adams in discharge of a debt that Anderson owed Adams. Adams thus came into the possession of the three deeds — from Dixon to Thomas, Thomas to Miller, and Miller to Adams — but did not file any of them for record until June 18, 1836, when all were recorded. *Ib.*, 33–5.

Lincoln charged that both assignments of the judgment — the one discovered by him signed by Anderson's mark and the one alleged by Adams to be the only and original assignment in writing by Anderson — were forgeries by Adams; while Adams as vehemently asserted that he never heard of such a paper as Lincoln said he discovered and, Adams insisted, it was itself a forgery.

Curiously enough the bill in chancery against Adams filed by Lincoln and Stuart, and Logan and Baker as attorneys for the heirs of Anderson, does not make mention of either of these assignments about which the newspaper warfare raged, but merely charges that, by fraudulent collusion between Adams with Miller, Adams got Miller to convey the land to him. Wright Admr. *et al. vs.* Adams. MSS. Files Clk. Cir. Court, Sangamon Co.

[1] *Memoir of Lovejoy*, by his brothers, Joseph C. and Owen Lovejoy, 122–6.

[2] *Ib.*, 127–38.

part of his general crusade against whatever he disapproved. An editorial entitled 'Nunneries,' full of unsavory suggestions — well-nigh charges — of grave misdoings, was of a nature to enrage Catholic men and women.[1] In short the young editor, in his passionate and all-inclusive championship of 'righteousness,' as he saw it, made himself as offensive to as many people as possible.

Meetings of protest against abolition 'incendiarism,' were then being held all over the country and particularly in the South, and one of these was held in St. Louis. A free mulatto of evil repute named McIntosh, while resisting arrest, stabbed an officer and murdered a prominent citizen in the sight of large numbers of people, and had been burned by a mob, a thing that seldom happened in those days.[2] This tragedy added heat to the anti-abolition meeting. Resolutions that the Abolitionists were inciting anarchy and endangering the Union were adopted.[3]

Lovejoy earnestly protested against any interference with free speech, and offered himself a 'willing sacrifice' if popular vengeance needs a victim.[4] He furiously assailed the mob and castigated a Judge for charging the Grand Jury that it could not indict for the McIntosh lynching if the deed was done by 'congregated thousands' whose names could not be ascertained.[5] To Lovejoy's delight, another mob promptly attacked the office of the *Observer*;[6] and so hostile became the public temper,[7] that he removed to Alton, Illinois, with his press, where some unknown men threw it into the Mississippi River soon after it was put on shore.[8]

Alton was then at the climax of a remarkable period of prosper-

[1] Lovejoy, 105–16.

[2] *Ib.*, 168–71. 'In the name of Goodness, what is our country coming to.' *Illinois State Register*, May 6, 1836, editorial on the burning of McIntosh.

[3] Lovejoy, 138–40.

[4] *Observer*, Nov. 5, 1835; Lovejoy, 140–54. [5] *Ib.*, 174–8.

[6] 'I have had the honour of being *mobbed* at last.' Lovejoy to his brother, July 30, 1836. *Ib.*, 181–3.

[7] *Ib.*, 181. The Presbyterian Synod at Marion, Mo., voted against Abolition. 'Two members from New England voted against us. . . . Eastern men when they go over constitute the most ultra-defenders of Slavery.' Lovejoy to his brother, Jan., 1836. *Ib.*, 160–2.

[8] *Ib.*, 180.

ity and was ambitious to take the place of St. Louis as a distributing point and centre of trade. Its principal commerce was with the South, especially New Orleans. In the then inflamed state of Southern feeling, fired by abolition activities, Alton wished to take no chance of offending its one great source of profitable business.[1] It was by far the wealthiest and most enterprising town in Illinois. Practically all its business men and most of its population were from New England, New York, and, in less numbers, from Virginia. Not only did Alton justly boast of her extraordinary material progress, but the rich little city was particularly proud of the religious, moral, and educational activity of her people.[2]

The citizens of this thriving community, indignant at the destruction of Lovejoy's press, immediately held a meeting, denounced those who had committed the outrage, 'unanimously' pledged themselves to buy another press for the unlucky editor, but disapproved Abolitionists and their methods; while Lovejoy, on his part, announced that although 'the uncompromising enemy of Slavery,' he was not an Abolitionist and had come to Alton to publish a religious, not an abolition paper.[3] The people of Alton and, indeed, of the State, understood that he pledged himself not to advocate or discuss abolition.[4] So a new press was bought for him and by August, 1837, the *Observer* had secured two thousand subscribers.

Not for long could Lovejoy subdue the fire burning within him. In a singularly inept editorial he charged the financial disaster of 1837, particularly severe in Alton, to over-specula-

[1] 'The citizens of Alton at the beginning presumed an abolition journal at their place, so near the State of Missouri, a slave State, would do the city of Alton a serious injury, and prevent the growth of the place. This was, as far as I understand, one reason the citizens urged against the establishment of such a paper at Alton.' Reynolds, 321.

The Bank of Illinois was helping Alton in its ambition to surpass St. Louis. Ford, 176–7.

[2] Mitchell, 113–5.

[3] Lovejoy to his brother, July 30, 1836. Lovejoy, 181–3. The *Alton Observer* merely said on the destruction of Lovejoy's first Alton press by mob: 'Its course is not such as we approve.' *Sangamo Journal*, July 30, 1836, condemned the mob severely and stood up for Lovejoy's constitutional rights.

[4] Reynolds, 318; Ford, 235. 'Upon this condition he was permitted to set up the *Alton Observer* without opposition.'

tion caused by the love of gain — that 'earth-born, grovelling propensity' — and also the source of slavery and the only thing that maintained it.[1] Other editorials appeared, each more denunciatory than the one before. In a heated controversy with a religious paper, the *Christian Mirror*, published at Cincinnati, Lovejoy was even more offensive than he had been in his anti-Catholic editorials in St. Louis.[2] Soon he began to advocate the formation of Abolition societies,[3] savagely attacked slavery and branded the Vice-President of the United States as the father of slaves.[4] The flag itself was made of material raised by slaves.[5]

So plunged Lovejoy toward his doom. Again his press was thrown into the river; but Abolitionists in Ohio bought another for him and the *Observer* continued its pugnacious and irritating course. The citizens of Alton held meetings of protest against the violation of Lovejoy's 'solemn pledge,' and committees labored with him.[6] The obdurate editor took his stand squarely on the freedom of the press, declaring, however, that he would discuss slavery 'with the meekness of a Christian.' Another public meeting assembled, Lovejoy grew more belligerent; [7] and finally, for the third time a mob threw his press into the river.[8]

The Abolitionists of the whole State were now aroused and a convention of 'all opposed to slavery and in favor of free discus-

[1] *Observer*, May 25, 1837. Lovejoy, 188–92. The *Baptist Banner* charged the Abolitionists with 'advocating amalgamation; that is, the intermarriage of whites and blacks' (*ib.*, 200); and Lovejoy wrote the editor of the *Christian Mirror*, Rev. Asa Cummings, a blistering letter, castigating preachers for not condemning slavery. *Ib.*, 192–200.

[2] 'I never said there was "not a chaste female in the [Catholic] church;" I said as a *general truth* there was not, and I repeat it.' *Observer*, May 25, 1837; Lovejoy, 202–4.

[3] *Observer*, June 29, July 6, 1837; Lovejoy, 212–6.

[4] *Observer*, July 20, 1837. Lovejoy, 234–44. This had been one of the Whig campaign charges against Richard M. Johnson of Kentucky, candidate for Vice-President with Van Buren in the campaign of 1836. Johnson was very popular in Illinois, because of his support of a liberal public land policy.

[5] Editorial, 4th July, 1837; *Martyrdom of Lovejoy:* Henry Tanner, 106.

[6] Lovejoy, 216–20. Resolutions by this committee were also adopted expressive of abhorrence of slavery, disapproval of abolition, and endorsement of such gradual emancipation as would be '*agreeable to the slave holding states.*' *Ib.*

[7] Lovejoy to the Committee, July 26, 1837. *Ib.*, 227–9. Governor Ford says that at this meeting Lovejoy denied that he made any pledge, which denial 'of what hundreds had heard him declare, increased the rage of the people.' Ford, 236.

[8] Ford, who wrote from information secured at the time, says: 'The people assembled and quietly took the press and types and threw them into the Mississippi.' *Ib.*

sion' was called to meet in Upper Alton,[1] October 26, 1837. Many attended. Attempt was made to exclude everybody except Abolitionists, but the trustees of the Presbyterian Church where the convention was to assemble, would not permit it to be held in the Church unless all who 'opposed slavery' were admitted. Rev. Edward Beecher, President of Illinois College at Jacksonville and a radical Abolitionist, delivered a sermon which hearers considered a violent speech for immediate emancipation — 'for his part, he did not sanction the Constitution.'[2] Other fiery abolition speeches were made, and Usher F. Linder, then Attorney General, and Rev. John Hogan answered them.[3]

An Abolition society was formed, but not one of the first to be organized in Illinois. Once more his Ohio friends had bought a new press for Lovejoy; and the Abolitionists, now armed, organized and under the command of officers, went to Alton to protect the press when it should arrive, announcing that they were prepared to defend it by force and to the death.

Beecher came, too, and delivered an abolition lecture in a church, attended by men with guns in their hands. Public excitement began to rise. Efforts at conciliation were made by the more moderate citizens, but these attempts at adjustment came to nothing. While Lovejoy seemed willing to compromise, Beecher was adamant. 'Had they made the least concession,' testifies Governor Ford, the tragedy that followed would have been averted.[4]

Another public meeting proved futile. Resolutions offered by Cyrus Edwards, Alton's member of the Legislature, while deprecating violence and counselling law and order, declared that matters had come to such a pass that, for the peace of Alton,

[1] A small town adjacent to Alton.

[2] Ford, 238; but see Beecher's account in *The Alton Riots:* Edward Beecher, 45–50. Edward Beecher was a son of Lyman Beecher and brother of Henry Ward Beecher and Harriet Beecher Stowe, author of *Uncle Tom's Cabin.* The Beecher family is one of the most eminent in American history, nearly all of the thirteen children of Lyman Beecher having attained distinction in literature or theology. Edward Beecher was born in East Hampton, Long Island, Aug. 27, 1803. He was a graduate of Yale and studied theology at Andover. Before his election as President of Illinois College, he was pastor of the Park Street Congregational Church in Boston. He returned to the ministry in 1844 and, upon his retirement in 1872, became the editor of the *Congregationalist.*

[3] Ford, 238. [4] *Ib.*, 240; Beecher, 84–98.

Lovejoy should 'be no longer identified with any newspaper' in the town. Many speeches were made, many resolutions adopted, all against forcible measures but in reproof of Lovejoy. Judges and preachers joined in the discussion. The editor spoke twice: he asked only his rights, he said; let the people mob him, he would not be driven away. 'If I die, I have determined to make my grave in Alton.' He denied that he had given any pledge and during his second speech 'burst into tears.' [1]

Ever higher rose public feeling. Business was suspended. The only talk on the streets was of the Abolitionists, their militant attitude, their military preparations. At last the press arrived and was hurried to a big stone warehouse where an armed company of sixty men stood guard over it. About ten o'clock at night, November 7, 1837, a mob gathered and demanded the press. Upon peremptory refusal accompanied by avowals that the press would be protected by powder and lead, stones were hurled at the building and the mob tried to storm it. Shots were fired and a young man named Bishop in the crowd outside the warehouse fell dead. The mob retired but soon returned, many inflamed by drink, and renewed the assault. The bells of the city were rung, horns blown, and large numbers of citizens hurried to the scene, some counselling quiet, others urging vengeance.

The roof of the warehouse was set on fire and extinguished, then set on fire again. Twice Lovejoy came out without being recognized, and fired at the mob. A third time he appeared at the door, was seen by the frenzied crowd and, before he could shoot again, was instantly killed by bullets from the muskets in the hands of the rioters. The defenders then surrendered, and for the fourth time the abolition press was thrown into the Mississippi.[2]

[1] Lovejoy, 271–82.

[2] In a few days, both sides were indicted and all acquitted, thus making the record show, sarcastically observes Governor Ford, 'that in fact the Abolitionists had not provoked an assault, that there had been no mob, and that no one had been killed or wounded.' Ford, 245.

Because of the profound prejudice of those who took part in this affair, it is difficult to determine the exact truth of the details, although all agree as to the principal features and incidents of it. While, on the whole, condemning the Abolitionists, perhaps the account of Governor Ford is the most unbiased and accurate.

About four years after Ford wrote his *History of Illinois*, Gov. John Reynolds wrote his reminiscences, *My Own Times*. Reynolds also disapproved of the abolition agitation,

Throughout the country the wrath of the Abolitionists flamed to the skies, and their newspapers and orators denounced in scorching language, the 'infamy' of Alton. Here, said they, was the hideous spirit of slavery, unmasked at last, and openly doing its devilish work even in a free State. Garrison's *Liberator*, with broad funeral border on each page, announced that an 'awful sensation' of 'shuddering horror pervades the land.' [1] The Boston *Wanderer* declared that 'the disenthralled spirit of Lovejoy is hovering around us . . . and a voice from his tomb cries, ONWARD! THE TIME IS COME!' [2] Abolition societies held fiery meetings and passed blazing resolutions. Public assemblages in many cities denounced the Alton mobs and their attack on the freedom of the press.[3]

One such gathering became historic. At Faneuil Hall, Boston, December 8, 1837, a great crowd came to a meeting, called by Rev. William Ellery Channing, to protest against the Alton outrage. Most of the audience, however, were opposed to abolition and unsympathetic with Lovejoy. After speeches from the platform, the Attorney General of Massachusetts, James T. Austin,[4] rose in the gallery and, in a loud voice trembling with passion, defended the Alton mob for throwing Lovejoy's press into the river: their spirit, he said, was the same as that of those who spilled the British tea into Boston harbor. As to Lovejoy, he had 'died as the fool dieth.' The 'storm of applause and hisses was deafening.' [5] Then a very young man of singular

and he wrote in 1854 that 'the public agitation . . . of slavery . . . should be avoided.' *Ib.*, 146. For Reynolds' account of Alton and Lovejoy see *ib.*, 317–21.

Two versions by Lovejoy's friends who were on the ground were written, one by Beecher, *The Alton Riots*, within a short time; and another by Henry Tanner, *Martyrdom of Lovejoy*, forty-three years afterward.

[1] However, Garrison, sternly true to his pacific principles, 'solemnly protested' against the use of 'carnal weapons under any pretext or in any extremity whatever.' *Liberator*, Nov. 24, 1837.

[2] Lovejoy, 331. For extracts from editorials of all papers thus denouncing the killing of Lovejoy see *ib.*, 222–37.

[3] *Ib.*, 314–22.

[4] Austin was then fifty-three years old. He had been Attorney General for five years and continued in that office for six years longer. He was a son-in-law of Elbridge Gerry and a pronounced, outspoken opponent of abolition methods, as were nearly all Boston professional and business men at that time.

[5] Commenting on Austin's speech, the *Boston Atlas* said that it was 'most able and triumphant.'

physical beauty and 'radiant of face' took the platform. Few at the meeting knew who he was, and the crowd did not want to hear him. When, finally, he was permitted to speak, he denounced Austin. In a voice quiet and attractive, yet 'thrilling with emotion,' he exclaimed: 'Sir, when I heard the gentleman lay down principles which place the murderers of Alton side by side with Otis and Hancock, with Quincy and Adams, I thought those pictured lips [pointing to the portraits in the Hall] would have broken into voice to rebuke the recreant American — the slanderer of the dead.' Wendell Phillips had begun his career; abolition had found its golden trumpet.[1]

Thus, from the moment of the killing of Lovejoy to that of the hanging of John Brown, 'The Martyrdom of Lovejoy' became a battle cry of Abolitionists;[2] and the Alton catastrophe did more to increase their numbers and inflame their feelings, than their warfare upon slavery itself.

For the most part, however, the press of the country was quiet, except for expressions of disapproval of mobs generally and insistence upon the freedom of the press. In Illinois, especially, general sentiment ran against Lovejoy, but one paper in the State, the *Peoria Register*, was outspoken and severe.[3] All, however, condemned mob violence. 'In the supremacy of the laws *ALONE* is security. The first duty of every citizen is to maintain that supremacy, whatever may oppose it, or whatever may be the hazard,' asserted one editor,[4] thus voicing the general sentiment to which Lincoln was soon to give expression. The Springfield papers merely printed, without comment, the formal statement of the Mayor of Alton giving the bare facts of the event.[5] But at Jacksonville, thirty miles

[1] *Speeches and Lectures of Wendell Phillips*, 3.

Phillips was then twenty-six years old, a graduate of Harvard and of Harvard Law School. He was tall, slender, an aristocrat of old Boston, strikingly handsome and his voice, though gentle and sweet, was strangely compelling and had remarkable carrying power. The Faneuil Hall speech gave him his first fame and he came to be recognized as a great orator.

[2] 'The burst of indignation from all parts of the land, as the result of this murder, was hardly exceeded by that which followed the battle of Lexington, in 1775.' Tanner, 158.

[3] Tanner, 166–7. [4] *Illinois State Register*, editorial, Nov. 20, 1837.

[5] *Sangamo Journal*, Nov. 19, 1837. Other papers did the same. *Illinois State Re-*

from Springfield, Illinois College, the foremost educational institution of the State, seethed with anger. Its faculty were as outspoken as President Beecher himself.

Soon after the killing of Lovejoy, another mob at Vicksburg, Mississippi, hanged three white men, professional gamblers.[1] Indeed a wave of mob violence, chiefly directed at Abolitionists, had been sweeping over the land for four or five years.[2] In this state of things and about eleven weeks after the Alton affair, Lincoln delivered before the Lyceum in Springfield, a speech of capital importance. Although his theme was the danger and wickedness of mobs and the vital necessity of maintaining law and order, and although Lincoln specifically and at length spoke of the St. Louis and Vicksburg mobs and the burning of McIntosh, he made no mention of Lovejoy or Alton by name, but only a casual reference to the incident. The speech shows that it had been prepared with much thought and care; and this fact, together with the subject treated and the time and circumstances of its delivery, makes it the most notable of his life thus far and, in fact, for many years thereafter.

Here we Americans were, he said, with the most extensive and richest country in the world and blessed by institutions more conducive to civil and religious liberty than any of which history made record — all this 'bequeathed us' by noble ancestors. Our task and duty were to transmit this heritage 'to the latest generation that fate shall permit the world to know.'

So we must guard against danger to our country and institutions. Whence may we expect the approach of peril? From foreign military attacks? 'Never! All the armies of Europe, Asia, and Africa combined, with all the treasure of earth (our own excepted) in their military chest, with a Bonaparte for a commander, could not by force take a drink from the Ohio

gister, Nov. 24, 1837. The Mayor's statement was reproduced from the *Alton Spectator*.

[1] *Illinois State Register*, Nov. 24, 1837.

[2] Channing, v, 152–9; *Illinois Advocate*, Sept. 3, 24, 1834.

There was much lawless disturbance even in Springfield. In June, 1837, the Sheriff and a crowd broke into the office of the Democratic paper and, afterward, the Sheriff assaulted the editor with a loaded whip. *Illinois State Register*, June 30, 1837. Editorial on 'Mob Law.' This incident may have had something to do with the Lincoln-Adams quarrel.

or make a track on the Blue Ridge in a trial of a thousand years.'

Any real menace could come only from ourselves; and signs of doom had already appeared. Witness 'the increasing disregard for law,' the substitution of 'wild and furious passions in lieu of the sober judgment of courts, . . . the worse than savage mobs' rather than the officers of law. All this was apparent on every side — 'outrages committed by mobs form the every-day news of the times.' Mobs were not peculiar to any section; they prevailed in free and slave States alike. North and South, the mob spirit was 'common to the whole country.'

The worst were the Mississippi mobs that hanged 'the regular gamblers,' then hanged slaves suspected of plotting insurrection, then white men 'supposed to be leagued with the negroes, and finally strangers in Mississippi on business; and the St. Louis mob which burned the mulatto McIntosh, a barbarity 'the most highly tragic . . . ever . . . witnessed in real life.' The hanging of the gamblers in Vicksburg 'was of but little consequence' except for the fearful example it gave. So, too, of the burning of McIntosh in St. Louis. 'He had forfeited his life by the perpetration of an outrageous murder upon one of the most worthy and respectable citizens of the city, and had he not died as he did, he must have died by the sentence of the law in a very short time afterward. As to him alone, it was as well the way it was as it could otherwise have been.' Still, it afforded a 'fearful' example.

Such things encouraged 'the lawless in spirit,' and, besides, mobs in their blind fury were apt to hang or burn the innocent as well as the guilty. In short, the 'mobocratic spirit which all must admit is now abroad in the land,' might break down the people's 'attachment' to their government.

If this happened, if 'the vicious portion of population shall be permitted to gather in bands of hundreds and thousands, and burn churches, ravage and rob provision-stores, throw printing-presses into rivers, shoot editors, and hang and burn obnoxious persons at pleasure and with impunity, depend on it, this government cannot last.' Such was Lincoln's only comment on the Alton riots and the killing of Lovejoy.

Should this continue, he went on, some able and ambitious man would overturn the 'fair fabric' of our government, that 'fondest hope of the lovers of freedom throughout the world.' What, then, must be done? 'Let every American . . . swear by the blood of the Revolution never to violate . . . the laws, . . . and never to tolerate their violation by others.' To do so 'is to trample on the blood of his father, and to tear the charter of his own and his children's liberty.' Let reverence for and observance of law 'become the political religion of the nation.'

Of course there were bad laws, and 'grievances' for the redress of which no law existed; but, while bad laws ought to be speedily repealed, they should be obeyed, 'for the sake of example,' while they are on the statute books. Offences not provided for by law should be 'borne with, if not too intolerable,' until an appropriate law could be enacted, which should be done 'with the least possible delay.'

Take mobs: 'There is no grievance that is a fit object of redress by mob law. In any case that may arise, as, for instance, the promulgation of abolitionism, one of two positions is necessarily true: that is, the thing is right within itself, and therefore deserves the protection of all law and all good citizens, or it is wrong, and therefore proper to be prohibited by legal enactments; and in neither case is the interposition of mob law either necessary, justifiable, or excusable.'

If asked why, since we have preserved our institutions for fifty years, 'may we not for fifty times as long,' the answer is that there 'are now, and will hereafter be, many causes, dangerous in their tendency, which have not existed heretofore.' No wonder our government has lasted until the present time — 'it had many props to support it . . . which now are decayed and crumbled away.'

For example, the government 'was felt by all to be an undecided experiment,' and all persons with ambitions expected to gratify them by 'the success of that experiment;' but now that experiment was successful. No longer would the aspiring, energetic, and daring, be content with nothing more than 'a seat in Congress, a gubernatorial or a presidential chair.' To be sure, great and good men always can be found who would wish for

nothing more; 'but such belong not to the family of the lion, or the tribe of the eagle.'

'What! think you these places would satisfy an Alexander, a Cæsar, or a Napoleon? Never! Towering genius disdains a beaten path. . . . It sees no distinction in adding story to story upon the monuments of fame erected to the memory of others. . . . It scorns to tread in the footsteps of any predecessor, however illustrious.'

Such genius 'burns for distinction; and if possible, it will have it, whether at the expense of emancipating slaves or enslaving freemen.' Sometime a man of 'the loftiest genius . . . will . . . spring up among us;' and, when he does, it will require an intelligent and united people, devoted to 'the government and laws, . . . to successfully frustrate his designs.'

Until lately the soldiers of the Revolution had furnished a 'living history' of that pure and heroic period, but they had departed. They had constituted a 'fortress of strength' to American institutions, but 'the silent artillery of time' had razed that fortress. They had been a 'forest' of giant oaks, but now they were prostrate; 'pillars of the temple of liberty,' but now they had crumbled away. So 'other pillars, hewn from the solid quarry of sober reason,' must be set up. 'Cold, calculating, unimpassioned reason — must furnish all the materials for our future support and defense.'

Then 'let those materials be moulded into general intelligence, sound morality, and, in particular, a reverence for the Constitution, and laws,[1] . . . Upon these let the proud fabric of freedom rest, as the rock of its basis; and as truly as has been said of the only greater institution, "the gates of hell shall not prevail against it!"'[2]

[1] At this point an apostrophe to Washington is so badly mangled by the printer that, as it appears in Lincoln's *Works*, it is unintelligible and therefore omitted in this summary of the speech.

[2] *Works*, I, 35–50. This and other editions of Lincoln's *Works* give the 'Lyceum Address' as having been delivered at Springfield, Jan. 27, 1837, although printed in the *Sangamo Journal*, Feb. 3, 1838. Lincoln was in Vandalia, Jan. 27, 1837. *House Journal*. The Vicksburg and Alton riots referred to in the speech did not take place until the summer and autumn of that year, and the address was made on Saturday, Jan. 27, 1838, as stated in the text. The error in Lincoln's *Works* is doubtless due to the not unusual circumstance that, by careless typesetting, the *Sangamo Journal* of Jan. 27, 1838, containing the notice of the Lyceum meeting bears the date of 1837 inside the paper.

Thus, with tremendous national issues and grave events mingling in Lincoln's experience with local quarrels, small town politics, daily cheer and casual law business, he was called to an extra session of the Legislature in the summer of 1838, made necessary by the deplorable financial condition of the State. For the last time but one, Lincoln again went to Vandalia to face a situation which he had done so much to create.

CHAPTER V

LAST YEARS IN THE LEGISLATURE

This was the first time that I began to conceive a very high opinion of the talents and personal courage of Abraham Lincoln. LINDER.

WHILE Lincoln was filling the columns of his party newspaper in Springfield with articles, letters, and editorials against James Adams, and accurately reflecting public sentiment in Illinois as to mobs, Lovejoy, and abolition, one of the worst financial panics of recent decades was sweeping around the world. The result of extravagance, speculation, and over-trading, it was very severe in America, and in the Western States it approached a catastrophe.

The Whigs declared that the hard times were the direct and certain result of Democratic mismanagement of the Nation's finances. See what had come of Jackson's warfare on the Bank of the United States, they said. Had they not warned the people what would happen?

The removal of government funds from the Bank, the refusal of Congress, under the direction of the President, to renew the charter of that powerful institution which was the keystone of American business, the consequent withdrawal of its credits and retirement of its bills, together with the resulting exclusive reliance upon fluctuating currency provided by State and private banking concerns — all this, asserted the Whigs, had caused the general economic breakdown from which the country was suffering. There was, indeed, much truth in the Whig charges and they fervently believed the disaster to be the natural fruit of the Democratic onslaught upon the commercial interests of the country. For the most part none knew of the business collapse in Europe or did not, at least, connect it with the American disaster.

Among other public misfortunes which accompanied the panic of 1837 was the inability of Illinois to obtain the loans required by her grandiose scheme of Internal Improvements. Worse still, her newly chartered State Banks suddenly found

themselves in desperate case. In the spring they had suspended specie payments, as had all banks in the country; but the State Banks of Illinois held large deposits of State money.[1] So a special session of the Legislature was called to meet July 10, 1837, and Lincoln discontinued his newspaper controversy with Adams, while he attended that doleful and quarrelsome assembly of puzzled and resentful law-makers.

In his message, Governor Duncan struck forcibly the chord of despair. Everybody was happy and prosperous when the Legislature last met, he said, although, even then he was apprehensive; but 'no human forecast could have anticipated, so sudden a calamity as has been brought upon the country by the action of the Federal Government upon its currency.' When Jackson began his war on the Bank of the United States, 'there never was a sounder currency, or a more healthy state of things in any government in the world.' Now, we have 'a depraved and worthless currency,' made up of 'enormous issues of irredeemable paper' put out by 'hundreds of new banks.'

The present emergency rendered it an 'immediate and imperative duty' to consider the condition of the two State Banks of Illinois. All told, more than seven hundred thousand dollars of public money were deposited in their vaults and they had assumed large obligations of the State. Their charters were forfeit when they suspended specie payments, yet they had been forced to do so because of the general suspension by banks throughout the country.

'Immediate legislative action' must be taken to protect the interests of the State and save the State Banks from utter collapse. The desperate situation was fortunate in one respect. It afforded an opportunity 'to escape from the perils of that system of Internal Improvement adopted last winter, which . . . is so fraught with evil.'

Government construction, ownership, and operation were fundamentally wrong, said the Governor; individual enterprise, not government inefficiency, should undertake such work. And think of the wretched plight of national affairs, due to the usurpation of that autocrat, Andrew Jackson. The country is decay-

[1] Ford, 191.

ing, liberty perishing! Witness the last eight years! Once more Duncan made a ferocious attack upon the President's policies: 'may God in his infinite wisdom and mercy avert' the consequences of them.[1] Again the Democrats were furious at Duncan. 'We have never read a paper, from an official source,' so full of lies, so false to republican doctrines, declared the Democratic organ.[2]

The Governor's message, with which Lincoln heartily agreed, accurately gauged the heated feeling that pervaded the Legislature. Immediately a memorial of the State Bank of Illinois at Springfield praying a suspension of forfeiture of its charter was presented. Duncan and the Supreme Court were invited to sit with the House during the session,[3] and the short but gloomy proceedings began.

The questions which the Legislature had been called to consider related to the State Banks and to Internal Improvements; but friends of other projects could not be restrained. Earnest, almost wrathful effort was made to undo Lincoln's victory in securing the State capital for Springfield, and again his resourcefulness and courage were put to the test.[4] He was prepared, however; the *Sangamo Journal* had sounded the alarm. 'We are summoned to renew the same struggle. . . . Vandalia is wide awake, she has her strong man, General W. Lee D. Ewing [who] is a candidate for the Legislature. She is calling through her newspapers for a repeal of the law. All her energies are called into action.' [5]

Sure enough Ewing was elected to the House in place of John Dement, for the express purpose of securing the repeal of the State capital law.[6] He had held many important offices, had just finished an unexpired term in the Senate of the United States,[7] was one of the prominent men of Illinois, and very popular. He was an experienced politician, an excellent de-

[1] *House Journal*, Spl. Sess. 1837, 9–15. [2] *Illinois State Register*, July 15, 1837.

[3] *House Journal*, Spl. Sess. 1837, 15, 17.

[4] Many country newspapers were violently opposed to Springfield. *Illinois State Register*, Dec. 9, 1837.

[5] *Sangamo Journal*, July 1, 1837; and *Illinois State Register*, June 10, 1837.

[6] Linder, 62.

[7] That of Elias K. Kane, to which Ewing was elected, Dec. 29, 1835.

bater, well educated, combative, and noted for his physical courage.[1] On the third day of the session he gave notice that he would presently introduce a bill to repeal the seat of government act, and he soon did so.[2]

Midway in the session a sharp engagement took place over the measure. Ewing made savage onslaught on Springfield. 'The arrogance of Springfield, its presumption in claiming the seat of government, was not to be endured; . . . the law had been passed by chicanery and trickery; . . . the Springfield delegation had sold out to the internal improvement men, and had promised their support to every measure that would gain them a vote to the law removing the seat of government.' Thus Ewing raged.[3]

Lincoln replied with even greater heat, denouncing Ewing fiercely for his charge of corruption 'and paying back with usury all that Ewing had said.' Ewing was furious. Speaking directly to the Sangamon delegation, all of whom sat together, Ewing exclaimed: 'Gentlemen, have you no other champion than this coarse and vulgar fellow to bring into the lists against me? Do you suppose that I will condescend to break a lance with your low and obscure colleague?'

Everybody expected a challenge; for Ewing was a fighting man and it was the day of duelling. But mutual friends interposed and the quarrel was settled without a fight. 'This was the first time,' declares Linder, who witnessed the encounter and relates the story of it, 'that I began to conceive a very high opinion of the talents and personal courage of Abraham Lincoln.'[4]

A lively parliamentary scrimmage followed, Lincoln winning on every roll-call; a bill on the subject favored by him was ultimately passed and for this session Springfield was secure.[5]

On the third day of the session, Lincoln's Committee on Finance, reported a Bank bill[6] authorizing suspension of specie

[1] Linder, 62. [2] *House Journal*, Spl. Sess. 1837, 21, 48.

[3] Linder, 62. See also *Illinois State Register*, July 21, 28, 1837. [4] Linder, 62–3.

[5] *House Journal*, Spl. Sess. 1837, 104–6, 119, 140. Lincoln was a member of the committee that reported the bill. The Senate did not act upon it, however, and so no law was enacted on the subject, which was what Lincoln and Springfield wanted.

[6] *Ib.*, 18, 28.

payments for a limited time and under careful restrictions; and next day James Shields moved to substitute a comprehensive bill of his own [1] which became the basis of the law finally enacted.[2] Most of the session was taken up with the consideration of this legislation — resolutions, motions, amendments, roll-calls, constant debate.[3] Excitement was high. 'The Bank question is, at present, the all absorbing topic,' declared the *Illinois State Register* in an editorial on the Legislature.[4]

Throughout these long and involved proceedings, Lincoln steadily voted favorably to the Bank, at one time going so far as to oppose an amendment reserving to the Legislature the right to repeal or modify the Act of 1835 incorporating the Bank, and requiring the Bank to consent to such reservation [5] — this, of course, in consideration of the passage of the suspension law now asked by the Bank. This vote, and, indeed, Lincoln's whole attitude and conduct in the Bank controversy were strongly conservative and in firm support of vested interests and the conduct of business, unmolested as far as possible, by legislative or any kind of governmental interference.

Yet he voted for the proposition that, in case the Bank act was violated during the suspension of specie payments, stockholders should be personally liable for the redemption of the notes of the Bank 'in proportion to their stock;' for an inquiry as to whether any members of the House were officers of the Bank or indebted to it; and then voted against the whole Bank bill as amended.[6]

In spite of well-nigh hopeless financial conditions, the Legislature could not muster up courage to abandon the Internal Improvement scheme, and a bill to repeal it was promptly killed by a heavy majority, Lincoln voting nay.[7] Douglas went to Vandalia and urged that work on internal improvements be sus-

[1] *House Journal*, Spl. Sess. 1837, 29–31. [2] *Laws of Illinois*, Spl. Sess. 1837, 6–7.

[3] *House Journal*, Spl. Sess. 1837, 52–3, 70–2, 83–6, 90–1, 98–102, 132–6, 152–3.

[4] *Illinois State Register*, July 15, 1837. See also speech of William W. Happy of Morgan County against the Bank (*ib.*, July 28) and that of James A. Shields of Randolph County for the Bank. *Ib.*, Aug. 4, 1837.

[5] *House Journal*, Spl. Sess. 1837, 100–1. [6] *Ib.*, 85–6, 152–3.

[7] *Ib.*, 74–5. 'Here ends we hope forever, the opposition to our noble system of Improvement.' *Illinois State Register*, July 15, 1837.

pended until a more favorable season; but even his support of the Whig Governor's request was unavailing.[1] After languid discussion the Legislature finally passed a brief act, Lincoln voting aye,[2] requiring the Commissioners of Public Works as soon as practicable 'to proceed to the survey, location and construction of several routes of railroads, and other public improvements.' [3] He opposed the calling of a Convention to make a new State Constitution,[4] secured the passage of an act extending the corporate powers of Springfield,[5] and was active in legislation concerning the location of roads.[6]

At this session was a member of the House who, thereafter, was to be intimately associated with Lincoln's early political activities. Edward D. Baker, born in England, was then twenty-six years old, strikingly handsome, gifted with an eloquence surpassed only by the great orators, and endowed with a rare and noble gallantry of spirit. He had been chosen at a special election as one of the representatives from Sangamon County to succeed Daniel Stone, who had resigned. He was soon to win greater popular favor than Lincoln himself and to have one of the most worthy and picturesque careers among those of the lesser figures in American history. Like Hardin, he was fated to die on the battle field.[7]

Upon adjournment, July 22, 1837, Lincoln went back to

[1] Stevens, 312. Douglas had been appointed Register of the Land Office upon the recommendation of members of the Legislature, vice George Forquer. *Sangamo Journal*, Feb. 11, 1837.

[2] *House Journal*, Spl. Sess. 1837, 139.

[3] *Laws of Illinois*, 1837, 45. A long report was also adopted militantly supporting the internal improvement law passed by the previous Legislature and rebuking Duncan. As to private rather than public construction and operation of railroads and canals, the report observes: 'If the mighty energies of this great State, should be trammelled by a connection with incorporated companies, managed and controlled by the moneyed interests of other States and countries, it could not fail soon to become a source of unavailing regret to her citizens.' *House Journal*, Spl. Sess. 1837, 177–81.

[4] *Ib.*, 62–3. The resolution passed the House, but was rejected by the Senate. *Ib.*, 115.

[5] *Ib.*, 88. This bill failed in the Senate.

[6] *Ib.* One of these road laws brings the flavor of New Salem. Lincoln procured an amendment authorizing Bowling Green, Bennett Abell, and John Bennett to relocate the part of the State road between Petersburg and New Salem. *Ib.*, 123; *Works*, I, 55.

[7] Power, 87–9. Stone resigned because he had been elected Judge of the Galena Circuit and he soon removed to that town.

Springfield, his already high reputation in that town still further enhanced and his popularity increased. His bellicosity expanded and continued to grow until deflated by a dramatic but unhappy incident that gave him his second and badly needed lesson in discipline.

When, for the last time, the General Assembly of Illinois met at Vandalia, December 3, 1838, Lincoln as undisputed leader of his party in the House was, of course, the Whig candidate for Speaker. He received his full party strength, but William Lee D. Ewing was elected by a vote of forty-three to thirty-eight for Lincoln.[1] The fine personal appearance of the members of the Legislature, of which mention has been made, was again noted by onlookers, one of whom declared that, having seen the Legislatures of several other States, none in this respect surpassed that of Illinois in 1838.[2]

The Governor's message outlined the work of the General Assembly. The big problem, he said, was how to get rid of the internal improvement incubus 'without too great a sacrifice of public or private interests.' Much money had been 'squandered' on useless projects, and sometimes to 'the detriment of the public interest.' Officers and employees of the improvement system had had members in the last Legislature and will have them in this one, to support or oppose any bill affecting their jobs. Government should have nothing to do with such projects; they should be 'left in the hands of the citizens . . . or corporations.' Government ownership and operation meant not only waste and corruption, but through 'numerous officers and dependents' the influencing of elections and legislation. So Duncan urged the enactment of a general incorporation law; and, if the Legislature insisted on retaining the Internal Improvement system, at least let the survey of roads be subjected to revision by the Board of Public Works.

The Governor could not keep his hands off national politics, in which Lincoln was interested even more keenly than he. The Presidency had 'become a mere . . . electioneering establishment, to furnish places, out of which their partisan friends can

[1] *House Journal*, Sess. 1838–9, 5–6.

[2] *Sangamo Journal*, Dec. 15, 1838, reporting legislative proceedings of Dec. 5.

make fortunes.' Congress was corrupted by patronage, which was also 'notoriously used to influence State elections.' Everybody knew that 'subordinate collectors . . . have squandered the public money, with the perfect knowledge of the Executive.' If this keeps on liberty is doomed; already freedom languishes! [1]

With these words of admonition and foreboding Joseph Duncan went out of office. To take the place of the defunct National Bank, Van Buren had devised the Independent Treasury through which the Government could collect, keep and disburse the public revenues. The Whigs furiously assailed it. Here, they thundered, was a specific and compelling cause of the hard times that lately had ground the faces of the people. The Democrats of Illinois were stricken with panic.[2] So the newly elected Democratic Governor, Thomas Carlin, who was immediately inaugurated, delivered a message glowing with cheer and hope, in striking contrast with Duncan's melancholy words. The Democrats must be heartened.

Carlin buoyantly declared that 'the mismanagement and overaction' of the Banks of the country had caused the financial depression. See how quickly the nation had recovered. The progress of other States had been checked, but not that of Illinois — she had 'kept steadily on in the march of improvement.' Think of her growth in population, wealth, prosperity. 'Her prospects are truly bright and flattering;' soon Illinois would be second to no State in the Union.

Let Illinois attend chiefly to the education of her children. Of course banking required attention, too — sharp attention. Penal laws should be enacted to compel State Banks to observe their charters strictly; and the Legislature should frequently examine them. Government construction and ownership of internal improvements were much better than private. The system adopted by the Legislature of 1836–37 was, perhaps, too ambitious; but 'near two millions of dollars have been expended' upon it and 'the character and credit of the State forbid its abandonment.'

The Jackson-Van Buren policies were sound, wholesome, beneficent. The issue now was a National Bank or an Independ-

[1] *House Journal*, Sess. 1838–9, 10–17. [2] Stevens, 311–2.

ent Treasury; 'under these opposite measures, the two great political parties of the country have ranged themselves.' A National Bank was 'unconstitutional, irrepublican and dangerous;' an Independent Treasury would 'dissolve the connection between the Government and Banks,' collect and disburse the public revenue in specie, safeguard the public funds, 'insure a circulating and sound uniform medium,' and promote the general welfare.[1]

Thus were stated the creeds of the political parties of the day, one of which Lincoln championed with all the aggressive vigor of youth. He was now fairly within that period of partisanship from which, after a dozen years, he was to emerge disillusioned and chastened.

The belligerent Whigs promptly took up Governor Carlin's challenge. In less than a fortnight, Lincoln's personal friend and intimate, and his associate on the Committee on Finance, Archibald Williams of Adams County, presented from that Committee a remarkable report, obviously intended and admirably adapted to be a Whig campaign document. As a member of the Committee, Lincoln helped to formulate it, and the probability is almost conclusive that he wrote most or all of it. The style and method of reasoning are distinctly those of Lincoln.

A succinct history of banks in relation to the Government was given. They had been used as fiscal agents from and including the administration of Washington to that of Van Buren now in power, with two brief lapses.[2] During this long period our prosperity had been 'beyond all parallel in the previous annals of the world.' A financial system under which such happy wonders occurred, could not 'in itself be "*radically and fundamentally defective.*"' Then followed a rapid summary of the unsuccessful efforts to break down the system of banks as fiscal agents of the Government, and an examination of Van Buren's plan to substitute for that old and tested system, the 'new and untried' device of a Sub-treasury, which Congress had twice rejected, many

[1] *House Journal*, Sess. 1838–9, 26–30.

[2] One from 1811, when the charter of the first Bank of the United States expired, until 1816, when the Second Bank of the United States was chartered; and the other 'from the removal of the deposites from the latter bank in 1833,' by Jackson until the end of his term of office. *Ib.*, 98.

of the strongest Democrats in the National House and Senate having voted against it.

The fact that European nations had adopted similar methods to the Independent Treasury proposed by Van Buren was no reason that America should do so. Is there 'any thing in the character of their governments, or the condition of their subjects, which should excite the envy or challenge the imitation of the American people? . . . A divorce of Bank and State! . . . An Independent Treasury!' Independent of whom? Independent of the people, indeed, but 'dependent upon the President, the Secretary of the Treasury and thousands of subordinate officers, who hold their appointments at the discretion of the President,' including 'numerous secret agents who . . . may be sent into every part of the Union to operate upon elections.'

The 'declamation' that the public funds were not safe in Banks was answered by testimony to the contrary in the report of 1834–35 of Levi Woodbury, Secretary of the Treasury. The Committee quoted, too, President Van Buren's recent tribute to the Banks for their 'honorable course' during the late panic.[1] Against these Democratic testimonials consider 'the frequent and extensive defalcations of "individual agents of the United States;" . . . the surprising list of defaulters among the collectors and receivers of the public moneys' presented in the last report of the Secretary of the Treasury; 'and, very recently, the enormous defalcation of the collector at New York [Swartwout] amounting (as reported) to one million two hundred thousand dollars.'

So the Committee submitted resolutions that a Sub-treasury was bad; that the Illinois delegation be instructed to vote against that system 'in any form whatever;' and to 'use all their efforts to prevent . . . the chartering of a National Bank of any kind.'[2]

Thus the Illinois Whigs astutely opposed the Administration plan, while playing into the hands of all State Banks among which the national funds had been distributed. In the Whig report Lincoln's political cleverness is manifested no less than his literary skill.

[1] In his message of Dec. 3, 1838. *Messages:* Richardson, III, 483–505.

[2] *House Journal*, Sess. 1838–9, 98–103.

At once the Democrats on the Finance Committee filed a minority report stating the position of their party. The Whig report having taken the National Bank out of the controversy, the Democrats were driven to an attack on State Banks, especially as public depositories, a most hazardous political manœuver. They strove to get out of the dilemma by excepting the State Banks of Illinois from their general indictment of State Banks. Banks were not safe — witness the numerous failures of State Banks which twice had thrown the General Government 'on the verge of bankruptcy;' the public funds would not be available in case of emergency, such as war; 'an unnatural and unholy alliance between the General Government and the State Banks' would be that 'union of the purse and the sword,' so abhorred 'in all countries, and at all times.'

How much better and safer an Independent Treasury by which public funds would slowly and gradually be withdrawn in specie from the State Banks, until 'no other currency shall be received or disbursed, but that known to the constitution . . . in the words of Daniel Webster, "a gold and silver currency, the law of the land at home, and the law of the world abroad."' Thus the money of the Government would always be safe, always sound, always available.[1]

The Whigs then struck their next blow by Senate Resolutions bitterly condemning the National Administration for its 'partiality' in depositing in Missouri State Banks funds collected in Illinois, especially from the sales of public lands situated in Illinois, and insisting that such revenue should be deposited in Illinois banks. John Calhoun, the Democratic member from Sangamon, countered with a resolution that, in view of the Act of Congress requiring State Banks to comply with certain conditions in order to become government depositories, the Presidents of the two Illinois State Banks be required to inform the House whether they had done so.[2]

Harvey T. Pace of Jefferson County moved to strike out the word 'partiality' from the Senate resolutions. Lincoln, in charge of them, objected. He would agree to omit the word if he 'thought it was not true.' He then summed up the arguments

[1] *House Journal*, Sess. 1838–9, 103–8. [2] *Ib.*, 172–4.

made by members on Pace's motion and showed 'that the Government had been partial.' A Democratic member, Newton Walker of Fulton County, had said that the Senate resolutions struck at Lincoln's 'own party friends.' 'Well,' answered Lincoln, 'we are willing to go it;' let Walker 'do the same with his party friends.' As to investigation before passing the resolutions, Lincoln 'had heard similar arguments often made to put off trial in court.' [1] But he could not hold his full party strength, and the motion was adopted by an overwhelming majority.[2]

Time and again the question of depositing government funds in the State Banks was debated, amendments were offered and, finally, Lincoln moved to dispose of the matter by laying the whole on the table until July 4, which was done by a vote of forty-six ayes to forty-two nays, Lincoln voting aye.[3] But when that stubborn Whig, John Henry of Morgan County, resurrected the subject by offering resolutions against Van Buren's Sub-treasury and specie plan, Lincoln voted against exactly the same motion that he himself had made; for resolutions against a recharter of any National Bank; against a flamboyant Democratic resolution which quoted Jefferson's famous words about the probability that a National Bank might, in emergencies, overthrow the Government; and once more against ending the whole matter by laying it on the table until July 4.[4] 'There was a regular pitched battle between the Locos and the Whigs the remainder of the day.'[5] Finally discussion was cut off by the previous question and Lincoln voted for all the Whig bank resolutions which were adopted and sent to the Senate for concurrence.[6]

But the fight was not over. Next day James Copeland of Johnson County, who had voted with the Democrats, asked to change his vote on one amendment; and Revill W. English of Greene County moved that the Senate be requested to return the resolutions 'reported to them this morning, in relation to the

[1] *Illinois State Register*, Jan. 18, 1839, reporting proceedings of Jan. 17.

[2] Fifty-four ayes to thirty-four nays, Lincoln voting nay. *House Journal*, Sess. 1838–9, 231.

[3] *Ib.*, 231–2. [4] *Ib.*, 257–60.

[5] *Sangamo Journal*, Feb. 9, 1839, reporting proceedings of Jan. 30.

[6] *House Journal*, Sess. 1838–9, 260–4.

Sub-treasury system.' English's motion was rejected, Lincoln voting nay, and the Whig Senate promptly concurred in the House resolutions.[1]

The Democrats were sadly confused. Thirty-eight of them signed a paper, seemingly designed to be secret for the time being, advising the Illinois delegation not to obey the Whig resolutions against the Sub-treasury; but one of the signers, not understanding the party plan, thought the document a protest, and moved that it be entered on the Journal of the House. To the chagrin of his party associates, this was done and the plot exposed. Thereupon one member asked to withdraw his name.[2]

As the Whig floor leader, Lincoln was suave but merciless. He would permit the withdrawal, he said; but he declared that statements in the document were false and, at the proper time, he would demand a retraction. He would hold the signers responsible to the people, but if any of them 'was ashamed of it, he hoped the house would permit them to withdraw their names.' To the infinite disgust of the Whigs, the Speaker finally allowed the 'Protest' to be withdrawn altogether.[3]

For the moment the struggle ended by the adoption of resolutions for the deposit in the Illinois State Banks of funds of the General Government collected in Illinois, Lincoln voting aye. But so keen was the interest in the party conflict that the Senate rejected a House resolution against further discussion of national politics. After a shower of motions and roll-calls, the House agreed with the Senate, Lincoln voting aye, and the party battle went on. Resolutions and counter-resolutions, motions to table and to adjourn, amendments, and amendments to amendments spouted from eager partisans, the Whigs, under Lincoln as their leader, always firmly in control.[4] Then came a Senate resolution against establishing a National Bank 'on any terms,' because 'the recent policy of the States, in the establishment of State Banks, and connecting them with the various systems of inter-

[1] *House Journal*, Sess. 1838–9, 264, 299.

[2] *Sangamo Journal*, March 2, 1839.

[3] *Ib.*, March 9, 1839. This amusing paper does not appear, therefore, in the *Journal*.

[4] *House Journal*, Sess. 1838–9, 288–93, 299–300, 310–2, 330–4.

nal improvements in the several States, requires at the hands of this State an uncompromising hostility to a United States' Bank;' and thus the conflict ended.[1]

Suspicion of the State Banks, however, persisted. Richard Murphy of Cook County offered a resolution of inquiry whether they were doing mercantile business, particularly by the purchase of lead at Galena and the sale of it through bank agents 'in our Atlantic cities.' Sixty-eight members voted for this significant resolution; only thirteen members, Lincoln among them, voted against it.[2] There was a sharp contest over a bill reported by Lincoln's Committee on Finance, to increase the capital of the State Bank at Springfield, Lincoln voting for the measure which was finally defeated by the narrow margin of one vote; [3] and he voted against restricting the Bank from issuing notes of less than five dollars, a proposition that came from his own Committee.[4] He had cast the same vote earlier in the session on a separate bill which, however, was passed by more than three to one, Lincoln voting nay.[5] In short, Lincoln was the trustworthy supporter of the State Bank at Springfield.

Although as her friends thought, the selection of Springfield as the State capital had been settled forever, although contracts for the building of the new State House had been let and work was actually in progress,[6] the smouldering wrath of the opponents of Springfield again burst into flame. On January 7, 1839, Lincoln moved to take up the appropriation bill 'for the completion and furnishing' of that structure.[7] Instantly Orlando B. Ficklin of Coles County moved amendments that the act should

[1] *House Journal*, Sess. 1838–9, 340. This resolution shows that the Whigs were now in open alliance with the two Illinois State Banks, an alliance not admitted when Lincoln made his vigorous resistance to an investigation of the State Bank at Springfield in the preceding Legislature.

[2] *Ib.*, 305–6.

[3] Thirty-eight ayes to thirty-nine nays. *Ib.*, 556–8.

[4] *Ib.*, 486. The restriction was refused by forty ayes to thirty-six nays, Lincoln voting aye. *Ib.*

[5] Sixty-three to twenty. *Ib.*, 253–4.

[6] The contract for removing the courthouse from the public square upon which the Capitol was to be built, was given to Reuben Radford, who had such melancholy experience with the Clary Grove Boys in New Salem; and the contract for brick was awarded to Milton Hay, uncle of Lincoln's future secretary. *Ib.*, 140–1.

[7] *Ib.*, 181.

not be operative unless one hundred and twenty-eight thousand dollars, the amount of the proposed appropriation, were 'donated' by individuals and 'secured by bonds,' for the building of the State House; and, moreover, that at the ensuing election the electors of Illinois should 'have the privilege of voting for or against the removal of the seat of Government to Springfield.' If the majority favored that town, the State should reimburse the donors for all monies expended. Futile effort. After a volley of motions to adjourn, Ficklin's amendment was overwhelmingly defeated.[1]

But Vandalia would not yield. Immediately William J. Hankins of Fayette County (of which Vandalia was the county seat) moved an elaborate amendment that the Governor reconvey to Springfield the Public Square; and that at the next election the voters of the State should express at the polls their preference for the places where the new capital should be established.[2]

Obviously the Springfield men were alarmed. Two motions to adjourn were beaten and a third carried. Next morning Lincoln moved another adjournment which was refused, and the Vandalia amendment taken up; but after some confusion the House adjourned without doing any business whatever for that day.[3] On the following day, however, Springfield once more won decisively.[4] Still her opponents would not give up. A motion to kill Lincoln's capitol appropriation bill was beaten without roll-call; another very long amendment by the obstinate Hankins was rejected by a vote of nearly three to one; still another amendment that the people should vote on Lincoln's appropria-

[1] Twenty-six ayes to sixty-two nays, Lincoln voting nay. *House Journal*, Sess. 1838–9, 182–3.

[2] If no one place received a majority, voters at another election were to choose among the five places which had received most at the first election; and at succeeding elections, the contest was to be progressively narrowed until only two places remained and a final election was to settle the matter. *Ib.*, 183–4.

Hankins was only obeying the instructions of his constituents. On July 7, 1838, a public meeting had been held at Vandalia to protest against the removal of the capital and to demand the repeal of the capital law of 1837. That law was unconstitutional — the people of Vandalia had acquired vested rights under the original act. Moreover, every voter in Illinois in 1840 would have the right to express his preference at the ballot-box. *Illinois State Register*, July 6, 1838.

[3] *House Journal*, Sess. 1838–9, 184–5.

[4] Fifty-eight nays to twenty-four ayes, Lincoln voting nay, on Hankins' motion to reconvey to Springfield the Public Square, etc. *Ib.*, 185.

tion was defeated by an even greater majority; and his bill passed at last by a smaller but heavy margin.[1]

After the killing of Lovejoy at Alton, the Illinois Abolition Society made some headway and petitions against slavery began to reach the Legislature.[2] The Governors of Georgia and Maine had exchanged angry letters over the refusal of Maine to deliver two citizens of that State to the Georgia authorities, for having abducted a slave from Savannah; and this correspondence, sent to other States by the Governor of Georgia, was referred to the Legislature of Illinois by Governor Carlin. On January 5, 1839, the House Committee on the Judiciary, members of which included those brilliant and aspiring young Whigs, John J. Hardin and Edward D. Baker, made a careful and unanimous report.

The Committee expressed 'deep regret' that citizens of free States should interfere 'in any manner' with the rights of citizens of slave States. 'Said committee consider the holding of slaves as a constitutional privilege,' and any interference therewith 'a violation of a right which ought to be held as sacred as any other portion of the Constitution.'

'The cause of the abolitionists,' the Committee charged, was conducted with 'the intemperate zeal of misguided philanthropists,' the practical effect of which was to harden rather than to ameliorate the condition of the slaves. It was too bad that 'such questions should be agitated to distract the peace and quiet of the nation.' Until the Governor of Maine explains his course, the Committee hesitates to condemn that State as 'willing and disposed to encourage a policy [abolition] which ought to be viewed as a moral and political pestilence' and which, if encouraged, would finally 'spread devastation and ruin over the land.'

So, to prevent 'undue excitement of the people of the south,' by the conduct of 'misguided fanatics of the North' in defiance of 'sound policy . . . honest patriotism, and . . . the principles of constitutional law,' the Committee presented resolutions that the refusal by one State to deliver those charged with crime in another State was not only dangerous to the whole American

[1] Fifty-six ayes to twenty-six nays, Lincoln voting aye. *House Journal*, Sess. 1838–9, 185–9, 199, 434.

[2] *Ib.*, 213, 301.

people, 'but clearly and directly in violation of the plain letter of the Constitution;' and that no free State or its citizens ought to 'interfere with the property of slave-holding States . . . guarantied unto them by the Constitution of the United States, and without which guaranty this Union, perhaps, would never have been formed.' [1]

Against this report and these resolutions Lincoln made no protest; indeed they stated his views with exactitude, albeit he took no part in the heated debate that again arose over the subject. The abolition petitions to the Legislature, however, aroused Lincoln's Democratic colleague and former employer, John Calhoun of Springfield; and, midway in the session, he offered, as an amendment to a Senate resolution on another matter, sharp resolutions against the Abolitionists — 'certain citizens, males and females,' who have petitioned the Legislature 'to act upon the subject of slavery, and the slave-trade in the United States.'

Calhoun's resolutions recognized the right of petition, however, and in response to the abolition appeals declared that the National Government cannot do indirectly what it is prohibited from doing directly; that, since abolition of slavery in the District of Columbia — the avowed purpose of the Abolitionists as a first step toward abolition in the States — would be doing indirectly what is forbidden to be done directly, Congress ought not to abolish slavery in the District of Columbia or the Territories or prohibit the slave trade between the States; that the Legislature '*do not "protest"*' against the admission of slave States, nor 'against the annexation of Texas to the United States,' and that it is not only 'unconstitutional, but improper, inexpedient and unwise "to repeal all laws existing on the statutes of this State, which graduate the right of the citizens by the color of the skin."' [2]

These resolutions were laid on the table by a majority of eight, Lincoln voting against them.[3] Thus the more moderate resolutions of the Judiciary Committee, stronger in condemnation of the Abolitionists than the resolutions of Calhoun, were left as the final opinion of the House on the slavery question.

[1] *House Journal*, Sess. 1838–9, 170–1. [2] *Ib.*, 322–3. [3] *Ib.*, 329.

Throughout this heated controversy no word appears to have been spoken on Lovejoy and the Alton riots, no intimation given that anybody had ever heard of that tragedy.

Petitions against the sale of intoxicating liquor had also begun to trickle into the General Assembly.[1] Lincoln, himself, presented that of '631 citizens of Sangamon county, praying the repeal of all laws authorizing the retailing of intoxicating liquors.'[2] A great temperance agitation throughout the country was then beginning, and temperance speakers were holding meetings everywhere. The House granted the use of its hall to one of these orators, Timothy Turner, agent of the Illinois Temperance Society, for the purpose of delivering a lecture on temperance, Sunday evening, February 3, 1839.[3]

These petitions were referred to the Judiciary Committee. On January 26, 1839, John J. Hardin of Morgan County brought in from this Committee a lengthy report, accompanied by a bill 'to regulate the granting of tavern license,' and, without objection, one hundred and fifty copies of the bill and five thousand copies of the report were ordered to be printed, a most unusual proceeding.[4] Before the House could act, the Senate passed a

[1] For example: That of 'sundry citizens of Athens, Sangamon county,' for the repeal of the law granting tavern license (*House Journal*, Sess. 1838–9, 163); that of 140 ladies and gentlemen, citizens of Schuyler County, praying for 'An Act prohibiting the retailing of intoxicating liquors' (*ib.*, 206); that of 'twenty-six male and twenty-four female petitioners, praying the repeal of all laws authorizing the licensing of retailers of ardent spirits' (*ib.*, 301); that of '150 ladies and gentlemen of the county of Fulton,' praying to the same effect (*ib.*, 375); and from Greene, Henry and Macoupin Counties came like prayers (*ib.*, 423).

[2] *Ib.*, 319. [3] *Ib.*, 329.

[4] *Ib.*, 287. The criminal code prescribed a fine of $100, forfeiture of license and denial of re-license to those permitting lewdness, public indecency, or gambling in their taverns. *Laws of Illinois*, Revised, 1839, 222.

Hardin's report declared that the Illinois liquor laws as 'interpreted . . . not only permit, but rather invite to the retail of intoxicating liquors.' Most crime, pauperism and insanity were caused by excessive drinking. Among laborers on the canal, the vice was intolerable, causing loss to the State. The number of groceries [saloons] had increased alarmingly. For instance, Galena had thirty saloons for 3000 people. In fifty counties there was an average of twenty saloons; and not less than 1,220 licensed grog shops in the State. Only one county, Montgomery, was free of them.

The Committee admits 'that there is but one effectual remedy for this evil, and that is, the total repeal of all laws permitting the retail of intoxicating liquors, and then imposing a severe penalty on those who may treat at elections,' as had been done in Maine, Massachusetts, Tennessee, and other States; but the 'Committee have not the evidence . . . that the majority of the people of this State call for the enactment of

similar measure, and the two bills were thereafter considered together [1] and extensively discussed.

On the final roll-call, Lincoln voted against the House temperance bill, thus killing that measure, which was lost because of an equal number of ayes and noes.[2] When the Senate license bill was taken up, an amendment that sales of 'spirituous liquors by the dram or drink' be prohibited was rejected without roll-call, and the bill was ordered to the third reading by an almost two to one majority, Lincoln withholding his vote; [3] immediately thereafter, he voted to strike out the provision of the bill authorizing Justices of the Peace to grant licenses, which motion was lost by practically the same vote.[4] The Senate temperance bill, with amendments, then passed by a vote of forty-three ayes to twenty-seven nays, Lincoln voting nay.[5]

such laws.' When public sentiment demanded, the Legislature should 'boldly grapple with the enemy, and banish it from the State.'

Meanwhile the existing liquor law should be strengthened and broadened. The trustees of incorporated towns should have the power to grant or refuse licenses, since their citizens suffered most, instead of County Commissioners' Courts having sole power over licenses, as the present law provided. Committee Report, Jan. 26, 1839.

Hardin's bill prohibited the retail by anybody, of any intoxicating beverage in less quantities than one gallon to be taken from the premises, 'unless he is first licensed to keep a tavern' — penalty $10 to $100; that County Commissioners should grant licenses, except in incorporated towns where the town trustees should have that power; that license fees should be raised to not less than $50 to not more than $300; that an applicant for license must prove that he had 'sufficient meat and provisions, and comfortable lodgings for at least four persons' besides his family; that liquor should not be retailed 'by a less quantity than one gallon, in any other house' than his own tavern; that no license should be granted except on the petition of at least twenty householders of the vicinity; that an applicant must give bond in a sum not to exceed $500 that he would keep an orderly house; that, upon conviction, for keeping a disorderly house, the penalty provided by the criminal code should be increased by forfeiture of the license; that any retailer without license should be fined $10 for each offence; that licenses should be granted only during regular sessions of town trustees and Commissioners Courts and never in vacation; that laws and parts of laws inconsistent with the proposed law be repealed.

[1] *House Journal*, Sess. 1838–9, 318, 341, 433–4, 522.

[2] *Ib.*, 527–8. John J. Hardin voted for the bill, showing that it probably was the anti-liquor measure which he had reported from the Judiciary Committee. *Ib.*, 287.

[3] The vote was forty-three ayes to twenty-four nays. *Ib.*, 535.

[4] Twenty-five to forty-one, Lincoln voting aye. *Ib.*, 535–6.

[5] *Ib.*, 536. This new law repealed the old law, authorizing county Commissioners' Courts to grant the necessary licenses; and providing that disorderly houses should be 'suppressed' by the County Commissioners' Court; that the cost of licenses should not exceed $12; that no license should be issued unless the applicant gave bond, if required, in the sum of $300 to 'be of good behavior, and observe all laws and ordi-

As we have seen, no one member of the General Assembly had done more than Lincoln to fasten upon the State the Internal Improvement scheme, and, now that it was beginning to crumble, he came forward with a plan to strengthen and continue it. His idea was that Illinois should buy from the General Government all public lands in the State for twenty-five cents an acre, sell them to settlers and other purchasers for one dollar and twenty-five cents an acre [1] and thus create a fund to pay interest on the Internal Improvement debt.

On January 17, 1839, Lincoln presented from the Finance Committee a report and resolutions, all of which he had written.[2] Lincoln began by saying that purchase by the State 'on reasonable terms' would give the State control of all land within its boundary and also increase the State's revenue, both of which consummations would decidedly and favorably affect the Internal Improvement system.

'We are now so far advanced' in this, that we cannot abandon

nances . . . relating to tavern keepers.' The law was very severe against selling liquor to slaves and minors. Act, Feb. 27, 1819, *Laws of Illinois*, Revised, 1839, 673–5. By Act of Feb. 12, 1835, the limit of license fees was raised from $12 to $50. *Ib.*, 675.

The Act of 1839, against which Lincoln voted, provided, in lieu of the old laws which it repealed, that County Commissioners' Courts might grant licenses 'to keep groceries,' the applicant to pay therefor not more than $300 nor less than $25, in the discretion of the Court, and give bond for $500 that he 'will keep an orderly house'; that the license might be revoked when the grocer abused the privileges granted or violated the law; that the license should not authorize the holder to sell liquor in more than one place to be specifically described in the license; that 'a grocery shall be deemed to include all houses and places where spirituous or vinous liquors are retailed by less quantities than one gallon;' that 'the president and trustees of incorporated towns shall have the exclusive privilege of granting licenses to groceries within their incorporated limits;' all license fees to be paid to the County, and no license granted, if 'a majority of the legal voters,' in any county, town or ward in any city petitioned against the retailing of liquors, unless a majority should petition that such license be granted. Act of March 2, 1839. *Laws of Illinois*, 1838–9, 71–2. While not stringent, the act of 1839 was far more severe than the old laws. In some respects it was stronger than the Committee's bill.

[1] The minimum price at which the Government then sold public lands.

[2] 'I send you a copy of my Land Resolutions, which passed both branches of our legislature last winter.' Lincoln to Stuart, Jan. 1, 1840. *Works*, I, 140.

While the MS. of this important paper has not been discovered there can be no doubt of Lincoln's authorship of it. Aside from Lincoln's statement to Stuart, the peculiar style and reasoning of this important document are unmistakably those of Lincoln. Even his habit of underscoring words and phrases appears in the Committee's report.

The copy inclosed in the letter to Stuart was in Lincoln's writing but has no words underscored. The original Stuart letter and inclosure are in the possession of Logan Hay of Springfield, Ill.

it 'without disgrace and great loss.' Our improvement of the country enhanced the value of the government land as well as all other real property in the State; so if we buy it that increase of value will 'attach exclusively to property owned by *ourselves* as a State, or to its citizens as individuals, and *not* to that owned by the Government of the United States. . . . It is conceded everywhere . . . that Illinois surpasses every other spot of equal extent upon the face of the globe, in *fertility* of soil and in . . . the capacity of sustaining a greater amount of agricultural wealth and population than any other equal extent of territory in the world.'

To such wealth and population our Internal Improvement system 'would be a burden of no sort of consequence.' It is now alarming only because of 'our present numbers' and 'our present means.' Of consequence increased wealth and population are vital to the success of the Internal Improvement system and to the well-being of the State generally. Our chief difficulty is that 'so much of our best lands lie so remote from timber;' but if the State owned those lands, the Legislature could provide for foresting or for 'means of building and enclosure' which would not require 'the present profuse use of timber.'

As regards revenue, there are now about twenty million acres of unsold government land in Illinois which will cost us five million dollars if purchased at twenty-five cents per acre. Borrow this, sell the lands for five times as much (the present selling price), pay from the proceeds the loan and interest and we shall still have at least half of the lands left us.

Presently we shall have a heavy internal improvement debt on our hands and our public works, when completed, will not yield immediate profit, yet the interest on our debt must be paid. 'When this juncture shall arrive (as surely it will), we shall find ourselves at a point which may aptly be likened to the dead point in the steam engine, a point extremely difficult of turning, but which, when once turned, will present no further difficulty, and all will again be well. The aid that we might derive in that *particular juncture*' is the strongest reason for the State's buying the government lands. The proceeds from the sale of them will pay the interest on 'many million of our internal improvement

loans' as well as all the interest on the loan for the purchase of the lands; 'and that, too, at that *particular time* when we shall have but *very small, if any* other, means of paying it.' The interest on the land loan would be but five hundred thousand dollars annually, while the sale of government lands have yielded as high as three million in a single year; and if sales hereafter are only half as large 'we still should have left one million annually, to pay interest on our internal improvement debt.'

But is there 'any *probability*' that the General Government will accept such a proposal? Lincoln thinks there is. It would relieve the Government from 'a perpetual source of expensive and vexatious legislation' and the Government would get, 'at once, and without trouble,' one third as much as she paid for the Louisiana purchase, and at a time when the Government badly needs the money. In any case 'no evil can follow the making' of the offer.

So the Committee on Finance submitted resolutions that Illinois propose to the General Government to buy the lands for twenty-five cents an acre and pledge the faith of the State 'irrevocably' to fulfil the contract if the Government accepts within two years.[1]

This was too much, it seems, even for Lincoln's steady associate, Archibald Williams, who appears to have scoffed at the proposal as merely a scheme to enrich the State, as, indeed, it was. Lincoln replied: Williams was in error. Some thought the price of lands would be raised, others thought they would be lowered. The representatives from counties where government lands lie would see to it that high prices were not charged, since that would retard settlement. But look at the lands bought up by big speculators because they were cheap. Lincoln was against low prices for lands — it would hurt the settler because speculators would buy them. If the State had all the lands the Legislature would be just to every section. As to the General Government needing the money, 'if the national debt had not been paid, the expenses of the Government would not have doubled, as they had done since the debt was paid.'[2]

Lincoln's plan appealed to the House, the Senate concurred

[1] *House Journal*, Sess. 1838–9, 223–5. [2] *Works*, I, 93–4.

and the proposal was accordingly made.[1] So with the valor of great expectations, the Legislature enacted an extensive law actually extending the Internal Improvement act. In the numerous ballots taken on the various provisions of this bill and amendments offered, Lincoln cast no vote worthy of especial note. Throughout he merely stood by the Internal Improvement system.

Toward the close of the session an amusing debate took place on a reapportionment of the State, and Lincoln's part in it illustrates that gift of humor by which he brightened dull discussions, made everybody laugh, and kept the House friendly to him personally. He was for increasing the basis of representation and thus reducing the membership of the Legislature. 'Double' expense, 'double' time for roll-calls, 'double' the number of members 'disposed to protract business' — that was what a big legislature meant. When the House was half as numerous as now, it did its work twice as quickly.

In some fashion the number nine, as being favored by 'old women,' had been mentioned in the debate, and Lincoln seized upon this irrelevance to crack a joke. 'A few years since . . . the delegation from this county were dubbed, by way of eminence, the "long nine," and, by way of further distinction, I had been called the "longest" of the nine. Now, . . . if any woman, old or young, ever thought there was any peculiar charm in this distinguished specimen of number 9, I have, as yet, been so unfortunate as not to have discovered it.' This banal digression was delivered in Lincoln's inimitable fun-compelling manner, for the reporter notes that Lincoln's sally was greeted with 'loud applause.' [2]

The session came to an end with Lincoln's leadership more

[1] *House Journal*, Sess. 1838–9, 600. The Government, of course, ignored the offer.

[2] *Sangamo Journal*, Jan. 15, 1839.

Examples of Lincoln's other votes during this session are: the Legislature must not elect members or relatives to other state offices (*House Journal*, Sess. 1838–9, 121–2); against the election of school commissioners by the people (*Ib.*, 235, carried by fifty-four ayes to seventeen nays); for the mechanics lien law (*Ib.*, 350–1); both for and against betting on elections (*Ib.*, 371); twice to increase salaries of Justices of the Supreme Court (*Ib.*, 371–2; lost forty-three nays to forty-one ayes, and then carried forty-seven ayes to forty nays, Lincoln voting aye both times); against calling a Constitutional Convention (*Ib.*, 480–1, carried fifty-six ayes to twenty-six nays); against classifying railroads (*Ib.*, 510–1); for the improvement of Spoon River (*Ib.*, 594).

firmly established than ever. His good humor, friendliness, pungent stories made everybody like him and his resourcefulness, ability, and steadiness made all respect him. Cheerily and, as we shall see, with a kind of jauntiness, he went about Springfield or rode the circuit during the spring, summer, and autumn of 1839.

Stuart had beaten Douglas for Congress by a majority of only thirty-six votes in a district in which thirty-six thousand votes were polled. Douglas charged fraud, which undoubtedly had been practised,[1] challenged Stuart to submit the dispute to a new election, and Stuart had declined.[2] Douglas seriously considered contesting the election and this gave the Whigs grave anxiety.[3] Lincoln was watchful of his partner's interests. In preparation for Douglas's expected contest, he wrote a confidential letter, signed by five other prominent Whigs of Springfield [4] as well as himself, to various Whig editors in the Congressional District, among them the editor of the Whig paper in Chicago, asking them to find out and report to Stuart and Lincoln, whether any mistakes had been made in adding the votes, and whether minors, or non-residents, or unnaturalized foreigners had voted for Douglas.[5] Douglas finally dropped the idea of trying to unseat Stuart; and Lincoln hastened to advise the uneasy Congressman of the good news, albeit with misgiving,

[1] Many ballots on both sides were thrown out because of defective spelling of the candidates' names, but there is positive testimony that Douglas suffered from a systematic effort to have electors vote for him so as to have the ballots rejected. Linder testifies that a Democrat, who was vindictive because he was not nominated instead of Douglas, got the Irish workingmen on the canal to vote for John A. Douglas, James A. Douglas, and the like, for the purpose of defeating Douglas. Linder, 347.

[2] *Sangamo Journal*, May 10, 1839. The letters of Stuart and Douglas upon this election were printed in full in the Democratic paper. See *Illinois State Register*, April 5, 1839. And see *Sangamo Journal*, Sept. 8, 1838, Jan. 1, 1839; also *Illinois State Register*, Sept. 28, Dec. 21, 1838.

[3] The campaign had been hard fought on both sides. Although Douglas and Stuart travelled and spoke together all over the vast district (Stevens, 317), the party papers were unsparing in attack, unlimited in praise. *Illinois State Register*, May 11, 1838; *Sangamo Journal*, Aug. 4, 1838. When the success of Stuart was first announced, the Whigs held a barbecue at Springfield, where several speakers, including Lincoln, addressed the crowd. *Illinois State Register*, Oct. 26, 1838. The *Register* insinuated that the Whig leaders held a secret meeting to distribute Stuart's patronage. *Ib.*, Oct. 5, 1838.

[4] Joshua F. Speed, E. D. Baker, Milton Hay, and James H. Matheny. *Works*, I, 97.

[5] Lincoln *et al.* to the *Chicago Daily American*, June 24, 1839. *Works*, I, 96–8.

since, he wrote, 'you know that if we had heard Douglas say that he had abandoned the contest, it would not be very authentic.' [1]

So, attending to the firm's law business, making jokes and telling stories on the streets, in his office, at Speed's store and on journeys to the courts of neighboring counties, writing editorials and articles for the *Sangamo Journal* and, above all, keeping an alert eye upon the political situation, Lincoln's days were full of interest.

On October 19, 1839, Governor Carlin called a special session of the Legislature to devise some method of caring for the now appalling financial condition of the State; and December 9 the General Assembly again convened. For the first time it met at the new seat of government. The State House was not yet finished and the House held its sessions in the Second Presbyterian Church, the Senate meeting in the Methodist Church, while the Supreme Court sat in the Episcopal Church.[2]

Members were nervous, irritable, suspicious. Their state of mind and temper indicated that the session would be what Governor Ford afterward described it, full of 'bitterness and personal hatred.' [3] Lincoln would not abandon his idea of lifting the burden of the internal improvement debt by the proceeds of sales of public land owned by the United States. His scheme for buying these lands from the General Government at one fifth the price for which they were sold to settlers having fallen through, he renewed it from a different angle and in a different manner.

On the second day of the session, without waiting for the Governor's message, Archibald Williams, Lincoln's principal lieutenant and with him on the Finance Committee, offered resolutions that whereas the State debt now amounted to ten million dollars with six hundred thousand dollars annual interest; that total annual revenues were not more than two hundred thousand dollars, leaving an annual deficit of four hundred thousand dollars, exclusive of ordinary expenses of the State Government; that since taxes had been heavily increased,

[1] Lincoln to Stuart, Nov. 14, 1839. *Works*, I, 98–9.

[2] *Sangamo Journal*, Jan. 3, 1840. [3] Ford, 226.

further taxation would be intolerable; that the annual revenue of the United States, exclusive of the proceeds of the sale of public lands, was over twenty-five millions — more than enough to run the Federal Government; therefore, in order to prevent national extravagance and to 'protect the people of this State from . . . ruinous taxation,' resolved that the Illinois delegation in Congress be requested and instructed to procure a law for the distribution among the States of the proceeds of the sales of public lands.[1]

As we have seen, this was Lincoln's favorite idea and had been since his first candidacy for the Legislature. But the need was now extreme. By offering this proposal before the Democratic Governor addressed the Legislature, it is also obvious that the Whigs made a strategic party move of first importance. Williams' resolutions were referred to the Committee on Finance.[2]

Not to be outdone, the brilliant and resourceful Ficklin, now a Democratic leader, offered resolutions for a Legislative investigation of the State Bank at Springfield, and of 'any charges which may be preferred against said Bank,' which were adopted without opposition and the Committee appointed. The House paused long enough to elect a clerk, John Calhoun being chosen by the Democratic majority, Lincoln voting for Andrew Johnston to whom, later, he sent some poor poetry of his own composing.[3]

Then came Carlin's message. Because of the Internal Improvement scheme an 'enormous debt' had been piled up; to increase that debt the State's credit had been exhausted. The situation was 'alarming;' the people were disillusioned at last, and were against the Internal Improvement system. 'The destiny of the State is involved.'

Let the General Assembly drop all improvement projects which could not pay and finish only those that would pay at least the interest on the cost of construction; and order the sale of the remaining canal lands for carrying on that enterprise. The State Bank, too, was again in sorry case, the Governor declared; but, after a long tirade against 'the banking system

[1] *House Journal*, Spl. Sess. 1839–40, 7.

[2] *Ib.* [3] *Ib.*, 7, 8. And see p. 383, *infra*.

generally,' Carlin left the Bank's condition to the Legislature.[1]

For the first time since Lincoln had been a member of the House national politics were not mentioned in a Governor's message; but the approaching presidential campaign was on everybody's mind and tongue. Soon after the session opened, an extended and notable debate was held every night for a week in the church where the House met in the daytime. The country was still suffering from the desolating panic of 1837; and the Whigs lost no opportunity to impress upon the public mind that hard times were the result of Jackson's financial policies and were unduly prolonged by the Sub-treasury plan of Van Buren.

Feeling ran high. During November a joint debate had been held in the courthouse between Whig and Democratic speakers, among whom were Lincoln and Calhoun.[2] Apparently the Whigs were not satisfied with the result of that encounter, for they soon formally challenged the Democrats to another discussion of national politics, and especially of the Sub-treasury question. The Democrats promptly accepted and the debate took place between December 14 and 20, 1839. Douglas, Lamborn, and Calhoun spoke for the Administration, and Lincoln, Logan, and Baker for the Whigs.[3]

Lincoln closed for the Whigs on Friday night, December 20. His speech was to be a Whig campaign document and he had prepared with meticulous care. Interest in the debate had flagged and Lincoln's audience was small. He was embarrassed, he said, by the scant attendance, but, in spite of the 'damp upon my spirits,' he would sum up the arguments of those who had preceded him. Van Buren's Sub-treasury scheme, asserted Lincoln, would 'injuriously affect' the community through the currency. For example, the Bank, by loaning public funds to individuals, kept money 'almost constantly in circulation,' whereas if hoarded in 'iron boxes' it would be kept idle. Any-

[1] *House Journal*, Spl. Sess. 1839–40, 14–24.

[2] *Illinois State Register*, Nov. 30, 1839.

[3] Joshua F. Speed to Herndon, Sept. 17, 1866. Weik MSS. Logan says that Browning also spoke for the Whigs and J. B. Thomas for the Democrats. Logan's statement, no date. Weik MSS.

body could see that. How absurd to rob the people of the use of the money, which they sorely need, by letting it rust in 'iron boxes' when the Government has no need of the funds! With the skill of the natural campaigner, Lincoln pounded Van Buren's iron boxes until every voter could hear the solid sound of those treasure chests filled with gold.

Worse still, Lincoln continued, by the Sub-treasury plan the revenues would be 'collected in specie' — Van Buren had said so in his message. This would take more than half of all the gold and silver in the whole country, leaving the people 'to get along as they best can' with the remainder and whatever rags and shinplasters they may be able to put, and keep, in circulation. What a 'most glorious harvest' for office holders and public creditors, every one of whom would 'set up shaver' of shinplasters. 'Was such a system for benefiting the few at the expense of the many ever before devised?' Also by withdrawing the specie from circulation, 'distress, ruin, bankruptcy, and beggary must follow.' Who could contemplate 'without terror' that certain result? The man who buys a horse for one hundred dollars would find the animal worth only half as much, and so with every article of commerce. Of course time would adjust matters, but consider the suffering while adjustment was going on. Why invite a catastrophe so unnecessary?

Bad as all this would be for the whole country, it would be especially hard on States like Illinois where there were public lands, since the price of them would be doubled. 'Knowing, as I well do, the difficulty that poor people now encounter in procuring homes, I hesitate not to say that . . . it will be little less than impossible for them to procure those homes at all.'

Experience showed that the Bank of the United States had not contracted and expanded the currency, as the Democrats charged. Look at the long and prosperous period between the time when the Bank got fairly started and the time when Jackson began war upon it. Of course the Bank could not regulate the currency, 'either before it got into successful operation, or after it was crippled and thrown into death convulsions' by the Government. Let the Government help the Bank to supply a

sound currency instead of killing the institution that had so long done well that indispensable service to the people.

Take, now, the expense of the two systems, Bank or Sub-treasury. The Bank collected and disbursed the revenues without charge and paid seventy-five thousand dollars annually for the privilege; whereas, even by the estimate of the Democratic Secretary of the Treasury, Van Buren's plan would cost at least sixty thousand dollars every year, and other competent men testified that the cost would be not less than six hundred thousand annually. Suppose these extreme estimates were wrong and the expense of the Sub-treasury midway between them, or three hundred and thirty thousand dollars per year? Add to this the sum paid by the Bank for the privilege of handling the revenues, and the result was a total outlay of over four hundred thousand dollars every year for the luxury of a Sub-treasury.

All this was 'to be thrown away once a year for nothing . . . sufficient to pay the pensions of more than four thousand Revolutionary soldiers,' or to buy forty acres of land 'for each of more than eight thousand poor families.' Yet this improvidence was 'a matter entirely too small to merit their Democratic notice.'

Experience, too, proved that a National Bank is safer than a Sub-treasury. How did anybody know that anything would happen? Only by the fact it had happened before under like circumstances. Collectors of public revenue had defaulted heretofore — Lincoln named plunderers with whose defalcations the land was then ringing, and said that there had been 'some twenty-five hundred lesser lights.' Others would do the same thing if given a chance — 'most assuredly' they would.

Contrast with this forbidding chronicle the record of the Bank of the United States which, through forty years, handled nearly half a billion dollars of public funds without loss to the government of a single penny. Did this mean that bank officials were more honest than government officials? Not when the latter were 'selected with reference to their capacity and honesty,' which, alas, had not been done in recent years. Of course some men would be unfaithful, no matter how carefully chosen; even one of the disciples, 'selected by superhuman wisdom,

turned out a traitor and a devil.' Ah, yes, and 'Judas carried the bag, was the sub-treasurer of the Saviour and his disciples.' But the point was that the 'interest of the sub-treasurer is against his duty, while the interest of the Bank is on the side of its duty.' Lincoln argued this point at wearisome length, and, at last, modestly declared that his position was not only sustained by experience, but was also 'little less than self-evident.'

The Democrats advanced the 'sweeping objection' that a National Bank was unconstitutional, he said. A majority of the signers of the Declaration of Independence, of the framers of the Constitution and other 'Revolutionary patriarchs . . . have decided upon their oaths that such a bank is constitutional.' So had Congress, time and again. Above all 'the Supreme Court, that tribunal which the Constitution has itself established to decide constitutional questions, has solemnly decided that such a bank is constitutional.'

That ought to settle the matter. Moreover, every argument against the constitutionality of the bank was equally valid against the Sub-treasury. Lincoln here gave the familiar argument, first stated by Hamilton and elaborated by Marshall, that Congress can pass laws which, in the words of the Constitution, are 'necessary and proper' to execute the constitutional powers of Congress. It is plain that he had studied with great care Marshall's opinion in McCulloch *vs.* Maryland and much else on the subject, and was as much of a Nationalist as Hamilton himself.

The Whig champion took the remainder of the evening in answering Lamborn and Douglas. He showed that Douglas was in error as to the time of expenditures, circumstances of appropriations and the like. Lincoln marshalled his facts simply and with effect. Voters for whom his speech was written could not but understand the contrast he drew between Democratic extravagance and Whig economy. He would, he said, leave to the audience to decide whether he or Douglas was 'more deserving of the world's contempt,' either as to 'sagacity or veracity.'

Lamborn had said that while the Democrats sometimes err, they are right in principle, whereas the Whigs are wrong in principle; the Democrats are sound in head and heart, although

'vulnerable in the heel.' True, retorted Lincoln; the Democrats were indeed vulnerable in the heel; in fact, with their absconding officials, 'scampering away with the public money' to every foreign country 'where a villain may hope to find refuge from justice,' the Democrats were 'distressingly affected in their heels with a species of "running itch."'

Sound heads and weak heels! — yes, indeed, 'like the cork leg in the comic song,' which, the more the owner tried to stop it, the more it ran away; or like the Irish soldier who always prated of his courage in battle, but 'retreated without orders at the first charge,' and who, when questioned by his captain, explained that his heart was as brave as that of Julius Cæsar, 'but, somehow or other, whenever danger approaches, my cowardly legs will run away with it.' Lincoln made much fun of Lamborn's inept simile.

Then, in a highly colored peroration, Lincoln closed. Cowardly was the Democratic boast that in the coming election Van Buren would carry every State. 'It may be true; . . . Many free countries have lost their liberty, and ours may lose hers; but if she shall, be it my proudest plume, not that I was the last to desert, but that I never deserted her. . . . The great volcano at Washington, aroused and directed by the evil spirit that reigns there, is belching forth the lava of political corruption . . . in a current broad and deep, which is sweeping with frightful velocity over the whole length and breadth of the land, bidding fair to leave unscathed no green spot or living thing; while on its bosom are riding, like demons on the waves of hell, the imps of that evil spirit, and fiendishly taunting all those who dare resist its destroying course with the hopelessness of their effort.'

So 'all may be swept away. Broken by it I, too, may be; bow to it I never will.' Prospective defeat 'shall not deter me. If ever I feel the soul within me elevate and expand to those dimensions not wholly unworthy of its almighty Architect, it is when I contemplate the cause of my country, deserted by all the world beside, and I standing up boldly and alone, and hurling defiance at her victorious oppressors. Here, without contemplating consequences, before high heaven and in the face of the world, I swear eternal fidelity to the just cause, as I deem it, of

the land of my life, my liberty, and my love. And who that thinks with me will not fearlessly adopt the oath that I take? Let none falter who thinks he is right, and we may succeed. But if, after all, we shall fail, be it so. We still shall have the proud consolation of saying to our consciences, and to the departed shade of our country's freedom, that the cause approved of our judgment, and adored of our hearts, in disaster, in chains, in torture, in death, we never faltered in defending.' [1]

Such was Lincoln's speech, prepared, be it repeated, as a Whig campaign document in the presidential conflict of 1840 and used for that purpose. He revised it with great care for publication even annotating it with supporting European data.[2] The speech was printed by 'private subscription' in pamphlet form and distributed as a party tract; [3] and is, beyond doubt, the same in substance as that delivered by Lincoln throughout Illinois during that strange political contest. Seemingly he had forgotten Lovejoy, and was not, at that time, interested in the slavery question. His crusading fervor had been aroused exclusively by Democratic financial incapacity and wickedness, and only the campaign ahead occupied his thoughts.

Even the Democratic organ conceded that Lincoln's speech was effective; it was, said the *State Register*, 'in the main, temperate, and argumentative,' and in pleasing contrast to the 'coarse invective, unfounded ridicule, and personal abuse' ordinarily used by Whig orators and writers. But as to Lincoln's speech being 'unanswerable,' as his party friends were declaring it to be, the editor would answer it himself. This he did for two and a half columns in the same issue of his paper which contained his editorial praise of the speech, and gave slightly shorter articles in each of the two succeeding issues.[4]

[1] *Works*, I, 100–39. [2] *Illinois State Register*, Feb. 8, 14, 1840.

[3] Speed to Herndon, Sept. 17, 1866. Weik MSS. The title read: *Speech of Mr. Lincoln, at a political discussion, in the Hall of the House of Representatives, December, 1839, at Springfield, Illinois.*

[4] The main points in the *Register's* long answer to Lincoln's speech were: that taxes are collected for the specific purpose of paying the expenses of the Government and not to be loaned to individuals, as Lincoln had contended; that the public revenue was not 'shut up in iron boxes,' since it was not collected nor disbursed all at once, but from day to day; that the Government's balance in the Bank of the United States was, usually, not over five or six million, which would be the most that ever could be kept

The Democratic editor could not, however, suppress his admiration for Lincoln's speech, even when answering it. Making comment on a footnote which Lincoln had added to his speech before allowing it to be printed, the editor hoped that 'the time is at hand when he [Lincoln] will be found manfully battling' for the Democratic purpose of providing 'a *sound* currency for *all* the people. We regard this declaration [that specie makes a sound currency and paper does not] as an evidence that reason is about to resume that empire over his mind that has been so long usurped by prejudice; and that he is no longer going to lend his brilliant powers to give currency to mischievous errors, but on the contrary that his powerful pen will soon be found labouring to establish those true doctrines, which heretofore it has been his object to destroy.' [1]

The joint debate over, Lincoln took up his legislative duties, first writing Stuart about the firm's business — 'a damned hawk-billed Yankee is here besetting me at every turn' about eighty dollars due a client. Lincoln also took a fling at Douglas: 'the Democratic giant is here, but he is not now worth talking about.' [2]

For once, national politics do not appear to have been discussed during the proceedings of the House throughout the ses-

in 'iron boxes,' instead of one hundred millions as Lincoln asserted; that business was not done only by actual cash but, also and chiefly, by the use of credits, where 'every single dollar is sufficient for doing twenty-five dollars' worth of business;' that the slight contraction of the currency caused by the Sub-treasury plan would be distributed over a period of six years. But, said the *Register*, Lincoln was so partisan that he would accept no fact if stated by Van Buren. 'If he should hear that gentleman say the sun sets in the West, doubtless he would disbelieve the evidence of his senses, rather than believe Van Buren.' *Illinois State Register*, Feb. 8, 1840.

In the *Register's* subsequent answers to Lincoln's speech the editor said that, as to the increase in the price of public lands which Lincoln had declared must be the result of the Sub-treasury plan, everybody knew that Van Buren had for years urged the policy of graduating and reducing the price of public lands — Van Buren 'is eminently the settler's friend;' that the collection of the revenue in specie would not mean good money for office-holders and bad money for the people, since paper money, 'convertible into gold and silver at the will of the holder,' is as good as specie. Surely Lincoln does not believe in 'an irredeemable paper currency,' although his argument 'would seem to imply as much;' and so did his course in the Legislature; that the Sub-treasury plan will keep more specie in circulation by compelling banks to have specie in their vaults, etc. *Ib.*, Feb. 14, 1840.

[1] *Ib.*, Feb. 14, 1840.

[2] Lincoln to Stuart, Dec. 23, 1839. *Works*, 1, 139–40.

sion. Obviously the long joint debate between the Whig and Democratic champions had forestalled this customary practice; or it may be that the members were so distressed by their struggle to get the State out of the financial quicksands in which it had sunk deeply and was still sinking, that they had no time for partisan engagements.

The temper of the House was quickly shown in scathing resolutions offered by Wyatt B. Stapp, representative from Warren, Knox, and Henry Counties. They asserted that 'the present mis-named system of *Internal Improvements* was palmed upon the people without their consent or knowledge;' the facts had been kept under cover and, in order to 'clinch' the system upon the State, the people had been told that the cost would not be great. Railroads would cover 'every corner of the State' without 'one cent' of taxation; the premium on bonds and income from railroads would pay interest and also the expenses of the State government. All this had proved to be false and if the system were continued, the end would be 'ruin and desolation.' So Stapp wanted the Internal Improvement law repealed, and thirty-nine members voted with him. Thus, at the very beginning, the law was saved by only three majority, Lincoln voting against Stapp's resolutions.[1]

So began the fight which lasted throughout the session. On this subject party lines were obliterated and Lincoln's votes are of interest only as showing his somewhat confused state of mind.[2] Sometimes he did not vote at all.[3] Resolutions piled upon resolutions.[4] Debate was frequent [5] and violent in House

[1] The vote was forty-three ayes to forty nays on a motion to lay on the table (*House Journal*, Spl. Sess. 1839–40, 29–30), which did not, of course, kill the resolutions.

[2] *Ib.*, 128–9, 192–3, 196–7, 199–200, 201, 264–6, 275–7, 282–90, 299, etc.

[3] *Ib.*, 181–2, 188–90; etc.

[4] For example: that only one road be built (*ib.*, 34); that work be suspended on all roads except those 'in continuous lines from navigable rivers' (*ib.*, 46; also 100–1); that action on all railroads be suspended, the Board of Public Works abolished and a new Board created to conserve the State's property and untangle the condition of the

[5] *Ib.*, 112, 181–2, 196–7, 319–20, etc. When a legislative body goes into Committee of the whole it is for the purpose, usually, of amendment and debate, although they are not confined to this parliamentary state.

and Senate; and in the lobby the discussion was, of course, more unrestrained and acrimonious. Roll-calls came like hail storms, so many were the motions, resolutions, amendments. After five futile weeks, John Logan [1] of Jackson County moved that, since nothing had been accomplished and the House was disposed 'to break down the whole of the system at the expense and disgrace of our State,' as well as the State Banks 'before the proof is before the House of their corrupt doings;' and since 'it is better to die with short pains than long fevers,' [2] therefore the House give its immediate and exclusive attention to the subjects of banks and improvements and adjourn *sine die* February 3.[3]

This peremptory demand was not formally granted but had its effect, and the House rushed its work forward. While the meaning of some of Lincoln's votes is not entirely clear, most of them were in support of the now intensely unpopular Internal Improvement system.[4] He was pledged to maintain it, he declared to the House, and his 'limbs should be torn asunder before he would violate that pledge.' [5] He was especially anxious that the Illinois and Michigan Canal should not be abandoned, probably wrote the bill that finally passed,[6] which he reported from a select committee; and he opposed rigid requirements in the issuing of canal scrip.[7] The outcome of the long and quarrelsome discussion was the enactment of a law which abolished the

Internal Improvement system; that all State bonds sold below par and all contracts made by state agents beyond their authority be repudiated (*ib.*, 46–8); that the General Assembly decide by ballot what roads should be constructed (*ib.*, 35); that Congress donate to Illinois alternate sections of public land along lines of projected railroads (*ib.*, 107, 112); that private companies be incorporated to finish the railroads (*ib.*, 128; see also 143–4).

These few illustrations indicate the perplexity, anger, and unsettled opinions of the House.

[1] Father of John A. Logan. Linder, 343.

[2] Logan was a doctor. *Ib.*

[3] *House Journal*, Spl. Sess. 1839–40, 181.

[4] For example: Lincoln voted against the repeal bill (*ib.*, 264–5); and against suspending work on it (*ib.*, 129, 130); and for incorporating companies to finish the railroads (*ib.*, 128).

[5] *Illinois State Register*, Jan. 8, 1840. This statement was made by the Democratic organ during the next session when Lincoln, as charged, at last abandoned the Internal Improvement scheme; and since he did not deny the accusation it was undoubtedly true, for, at this period of his life, he was fertile in accusations and prompt in denials.

[6] *Laws of Illinois*, 1839–40, 79–80.

[7] *House Journal*, Spl. Sess. 1839–40, 204, 232, 235.

old and created a new Board of Public Works, and one Fund Commissioner instead of the existing funding officials.[1]

Lincoln consistently guarded the State Bank at Springfield. Early in the session he was hopeless of even preserving the Bank's charter. 'The legislature . . . has suffered the bank to forfeit its charter without benefit of clergy,' he wrote Stuart, adding that 'there seems to be little disposition to resuscitate it.'[2] But Lincoln manœuvered for the bank with skill and caution. Thus he voted that the Legislature had the right to alter or amend the charter, which proposition, however, was an amendment to another proposal legalizing the suspension of specie payments without forfeiture of the Bank's charter.[3] He voted against a resolution asserting that the charter of the Bank had been forfeited and directing the Committee on Finance to report a bill for a new charter on much severer terms than the old, which was beaten by more than four to one.[4] An amendment to the new Bank bill, making stockholders liable to the amount of stock paid in by them and exempting the State for liability for more than its 'ratable proportion,' was defeated by a heavy majority, Lincoln voting nay;[5] and another amendment, reserving to the Legislature the right 'to alter, amend or repeal' the Bank's charter as a condition of granting 'this revival of its charter,' met the same fate, as did still other amendments unfriendly to the Bank, Lincoln voting against all of them.[6]

The result of the wrangling was a decided victory for the Bank — a new law, for which Lincoln voted, that the forfeiture of the charter for refusing specie payments be 'set aside,' the charter 'revived,' and existing laws against the Bank's continuing in business be 'suspended.'[7] Lincoln's gloomy report to Stuart had been premature and without foundation.

[1] Act, Feb. 1, 1840; *Laws of Illinois*, 1839–40, 93–6.

[2] Lincoln to Stuart, Dec. 23, 1839. *Works*, I, 139. This letter was written immediately after the first contest over the bank and unpromising roll-calls. *House Journal*, Spl. Sess. 1839–40, 67–9.

[3] *Ib.*, 65–9, 80, 109, 136–7. [4] *Ib.*, 156–8. [5] *Ib.*, 230. [6] *Ib.*, 230–2.

[7] Act, Jan. 31, 1840. *Laws of Illinois*, 1839–40, 15–7. This law placed new but not burdensome restrictions on the Bank: The Bank should not make any loan on its stock; or part with its specie except for change to the amount of five dollars; or increase its circulation, while specie payments were refused, beyond its paid-in capital stock; or

The disconsolate friends of Vandalia reopened the capital fight once more, but found themselves helpless,[1] Lincoln, of course, protecting Springfield. He was a member of the select committee on the bill for the reincorporation of that town,[2] and guided it successfully through the House, a not difficult task. So was woven another strand binding Springfield more firmly to the ambitious young politician and lawyer.

Lincoln's votes on liquor legislation are of greater interest, perhaps, than any given by him at this tumultuous session. Seemingly, the so-called temperance law of the last session [3] had proved to be too drastic and was not working well; and, hardly did the House get to work, when Cheney Thomas of McLean County moved that the Judiciary Committee be instructed to inquire into the expediency of amending the law 'to permit any person without license, to vend spirituous liquors in quantities of not less than one quart, instead of one gallon.' [4]

Joseph Naper of Cook County introduced a bill for the repeal of the whole license law, while Robert McMillan of Edgar County proposed a more stringent measure.[5] On December 26, Edwin B. Webb of White County reported from the Judiciary Committee to which these bills had been referred a substitute as the license bill of the Committee.[6]

Keen and pointed debate arose. Joseph Naper of Cook County was against so high a license fee; and, besides, the Legislature had no right to interfere with men's appetites; 'public opinion ought to regulate these matters.' Look at Massachusetts 'where the Fifteen Gallon law had revolutionized the State.' Lincoln's colleague, Edward D. Baker of Sangamon

permit any single indebtedness to it above $10,000. The Bank must make monthly reports to the Governor; receive and disburse State funds without charge, etc.

[1] *House Journal*, Spl. Sess. 1839–40, 233–4, 324.

[2] *Ib.*, 252. Springfield was incorporated at this session. Act, Feb. 3, 1840; *Laws of Illinois*, 1839–40, 6–15.

[3] *Laws of Illinois*, 1838–9, 71. [4] *House Journal*, Spl. Sess. 1839–40, 34.

[5] *Ib.*, 62. By the existing law, groceries sold liquor in quantities of less than one gallon, but the law provided no punishment for selling without license. Act, March 2, 1839. *Laws of Illinois*, 1838–9, 71–2.

By McMillan's proposed bill, a grocery could sell only in quantities more than one quart, and a fine of ten dollars was imposed for selling less than that amount without license.

[6] *House Journal*, Spl. Sess. 1839–40, 85.

County, was emphatically for the bill. He was no extremist, he said, but liquor selling must be regulated; the good of the community, not the effect on the individual, required it. Wyatt B. Stapp of Warren County wanted license money collected in towns to be paid to the town treasuries.

Lincoln agreed. 'It was but just,' he said, 'either that towns should have nothing to do with the matter [leaving the granting of licenses to County Commissioners exclusively] or, if burthened with it, that they should have the proceeds of the Licenses they granted.' Isaac P. Walker of Vermilion County dissented from Lincoln's view: if towns would support the paupers created by their groceries, he would not object to the towns keeping the 'small pittance' of the license fees; but since the counties had to keep those paupers, the license fees should help pay that expense.

Stapp withdrew his amendment and Lincoln offered another, 'giving County Commissioners the sole power over the subject.' Joseph G. Bowman of Wabash County objected; a grocery was a nuisance which towns 'should have the power of abating, if insupportable.' Groceries were an 'evil peculiarly affecting the towns where they were located.' But Lincoln's amendment was agreed to without a vote.[1]

An amendment offered by Isaac P. Walker, 'that if a majority of the qualified votes of the incorporated towns, Justice's district, or ward of any city in which said grocery is to be licensed, shall remonstrate against the granting of such license, the same shall not be granted,' was defeated by a tie vote of thirty-nine to thirty-nine, Lincoln voting nay, thus beating the amendment. He then voted to concur in the Committee's bill.[2] On the third reading of this bill William B. Archer of Clark County introduced the same amendment, and again it was beaten, Lincoln again voting against it. On final passage he voted for the bill.[3]

After all the pother of this session, not a great deal was ac-

[1] *Sangamo Journal*, Dec. 31, 1839; *House Journal*, Spl. Sess. 1839–40, 85–6. The two accounts differ in detail.

[2] *Ib.*, 86–7.

[3] *Ib.*, 162–3, 262. The vote on the final passage was fifty-two ayes to twenty-nine nays.

complished. Laws were enacted resuscitating the State Bank at Springfield,[1] forwarding work on the Illinois and Michigan Canal,[2] and for the settlement of the internal improvement debts.[3]

Lincoln could not get out of his mind his beloved land resolutions which he had induced the last Legislature to adopt. 'Will you show them to Mr. Calhoun, informing him of the fact of their passage through our Legislature,' he wrote to Stuart in Washington. 'Mr. Calhoun suggested a similar proposition last winter; and perhaps if he finds himself backed by one of the States, he may be induced to take it up again.' Lincoln reminds Stuart 'that you and the others of our delegation in Congress are instructed to go for them.' [4]

The session over Lincoln plunged into the presidential campaign of 1840, the most picturesque, perhaps, in American history. Senator White had been dropped by the Whigs as their candidate, and, solely as a matter of the politician's cherished 'availability,' the one outstanding Whig leader and statesman, Henry Clay, had been rejected for a somewhat colorless, inoffensive person who, however, had the high political assets of poverty and a military record.[5] Harrison and Tyler became the Whig candidates for President and Vice-President, against Van Buren and Johnson.

Although delighted by the defeat of Clay because he was a slave-holder, the Abolitionists, as a whole, would not support the Whig ticket and a section of them organized the Liberty party pledged to immediate emancipation, and placed its standard in the hands of James G. Birney of New York and Thomas Earle of Pennsylvania.

The Whigs adopted no platform and Harrison said no word. They agreed in nothing except hostility to Van Buren and all

[1] *Laws of Illinois*, 1839–40, 15–7. [2] *Ib.*, 79–80. [3] *Ib.*, 93–6.

[4] Lincoln to Stuart, Jan. 1, 1840. *Works*, 1, 140–1.

[5] The Illinois Whig organ thus excused the desertion of Clay: 'We consent to pass by such men as Henry Clay and Daniel Webster, only because their fame is already immortal — because they shine within themselves — because the sickly light reflected from office and power, can add nothing to their splendor — because, come weal, come woe, their names will never be forgotten, so long as Cicero, Pitt and our immortal Washington shall be remembered.' *Sangamo Journal*, Nov. 3, 1838. Editorial, almost certainly written by Lincoln.

things Democratic. But fate and circumstances supplied better campaign materials than principles or policies could afford. A sneer at Harrison in a Democratic paper at Baltimore [1] gave the Whigs their campaign battle-cry. Harrison, said the contemptuous editor, would be content if somebody would give him enough money to live on in a log cabin with plenty of hard cider.

So the campaign became a volcanic eruption of volatile and unintelligent sentimentalism. Harrison was the poor man's friend, the farmer's champion, the log cabin and hard-cider candidate; Van Buren, an aristocrat who ate his meals from gold plates and drank his champagne from crystal goblets. Meetings of incredible size were held, barbecues given, monster processions formed. No other political contest produced so many popular songs, most of them without sense.[2]

June 4, 1840, a 'monster' Whig demonstration took place in Springfield. Processions paraded the streets. Hardin marched holding high a banner with the device of a dead rooster lying on its back. On its way to Springfield, the Chicago delegation had captured a Democratic emblem and hilariously displayed it on a pole in the form of a petticoat. 'While we write,' chronicles the Springfield Democratic paper, 'we are surrounded by log cabins on wheels, hard-cider barrels, canoes, brigs, and every description of painted device, which, if a sober Turk were to drop among us would induce him to believe we were a community of lunatics or men run mad. . . . We never before saw such an exhibition of humbug.' [3]

[1] *The Baltimore Republican.*

[2] For example:

'Oh, know ye the Farmer of Tippecanoe,
The gallant old farmer of Tippecanoe,
With an arm that is strong and a heart that is true,
The man of the people is Tippecanoe.'

or

'No ruffled shirt, no silken hose,
No airs, does Tip display. . . .
Upon his board there ne'er appeared
The costly "sparkling wine"
But plain hard cider such as cheered
In the days of old lang syne.'

[3] *Illinois State Register*, June 5, 1840.

Whig orators covered the State, attacking Van Buren's financial plans, but mostly appealing to passion and prejudice. The people cared for no arguments:

'Without a why or a wherefore
We'll go for Harrison therefore,'

rang the refrain of a Whig campaign song. Democratic newspapers and speakers were in despair. 'We speak of the divorce of bank and state; the Whigs reply with a dissertation on the merits of hard cider. We defend the policy of the administration; the Whigs answer "log cabin."' We urge the 'honesty, sagacity, statesmanship' of Van Buren, and the unfitness of Harrison; 'the Whigs answer that Harrison is a poor man.' [1]

In this popular emotionalism one Whig speaker, at least, kept his head and appealed to his audiences with fact and reason. The Illinois Whig convention, under the perfect control of Stuart and the 'Whig Junto,' nominated Lincoln as one of the Illinois Harrison and Tyler electors, and he spoke all over the State. Thus his acquaintance and friendships broadened. No reports of his campaign speeches exist, but it is practically certain that they were substantially the same as his argument in the debate already described, modified, of course, to suit the humor of his audiences. Often he and Douglas travelled and spoke together.

Behind the storm of popular fervor, there were genuine forces — the forces of hard times, desire for a change, anger over patronage. The Whigs denounced Democratic extravagance, Democratic 'mal-administration,' Democratic 'accumulation of executive power,' the outcome of which would surely be 'an Elective Monarchy,' What the country needed, what the people demanded, was 'Reform.' Down with Van Buren with his 'English carriage, English horses, and English driver.' [2]

Lincoln did other and far more effective work for the Whigs than to make stump speeches. Long before the campaign got under way and even while the Legislature was still in session, he

[1] *Pennsylvanian,* March 25, 1840, as quoted in *History of the People of the United States:* John Bach McMaster, VI, 565.

[2] *Sangamo Journal,* Jan. 3, 1840, editorial; and Resolutions of Whig State Convention, drawn and reported by Stuart. *Ib.*, Oct. 11, 1839.

wrote instructions to picked men throughout the State; and these orders, in the form of a confidential party circular signed by the Whig committee at Springfield, were sent to every county.[1] 'We have appointed you the Central Whig Committee of your county,' began Lincoln. Watch and work; your reward will be the 'glory' of having helped to beat the Democrats, those 'corrupt powers that now control our beloved country.' The Whig candidates deserve the support of 'every true patriot who would have our country redeemed.' The whole State must be so well organized, 'that every Whig can be brought to the polls.' This cannot be done without your help.

So divide your county into 'small districts' and appoint in each a sub-committee; make a 'perfect list of all the voters,' and 'ascertain with certainty for whom they will vote.' Designate doubtful voters 'in separate lines,' indicating their probable choice. Each sub-committee must 'keep a constant watch on the doubtful voters' and 'have them talked to by those in whom they have the most confidence' — also Whig documents must be given them.

These sub-committees must report to the County Committee 'at least once a month . . . and on election days see that every Whig is brought to the polls.' Let the sub-committees be appointed 'immediately' and let them make their first report not later than the last day of April. 'On the first of each month hereafter we shall expect to hear from you;' and when 'we' have heard from all the counties 'we' will advise you of the outlook.

The Whig State Committee will get out a party [2] paper for the campaign, says Lincoln, and encloses a prospectus. 'It will be superintended by ourselves, and every Whig in the State must take it. . . . You must raise a fund and forward us for extra copies, — every county ought to send fifty or one hundred dollars, — and the copies will be forwarded to you for distribution among our political opponents. The paper will be devoted exclusively to the great cause in which we are engaged. . . .

[1] The signers of this document were, Dr. A. G. Henry, whom Adams had beaten so badly for Probate Justice, R. F. Barrett, E. D. Baker, Joshua F. Speed, and Lincoln. *Works*, I, 145.

[2] *The Old Soldier*, edited by a Whig general committee and published by Simeon Francis and Company, then publishers of the *Sangamo Journal*.

'You must inform us of results' of any election in your county 'immediately.' The next Legislature will elect a United States Senator, so 'let no local interests divide you; but select candidates that can succeed. Our plan of operations will of course be concealed from every one except our good friends.' [1]

In such practical fashion Lincoln went about the work of organizing the Whig party throughout Illinois. To Stuart he hurried off a letter asking for a 'Life of Harrison' and other campaign data — 'everything you think will be a good "war club."' He adds that he believes the Whigs will carry Illinois; 'the nomination of Harrison takes first-rate.' Large numbers of 'the grocery sort of Van Buren men [frequenters of saloons] . . . are out for Harrison.' Lincoln tells Stuart of the joint debate: 'I made a big speech which is in progress of printing in pamphlet form.' [2]

Lincoln frequently wrote his partner on the political situation. 'I have never seen the prospects of our party so bright in these parts as they are now,' says Lincoln, though his own political outlook is not 'very flattering, for I think it probable I shall not be permitted to be a candidate. . . . Subscriptions to the *Old Soldier* pour in without abatement.' Lincoln gives Stuart a list of Democrats who will vote for Harrison, so that Stuart can send them Whig campaign literature.[3]

Again he reports to the Illinois Whig chieftain in Washington: After all, the Whig Convention did nominate him for the House again and Baker for the Senate, but only because the delegates thought Lincoln and Baker 'necessary to make stump speeches.' He tells other local political news and adds a postscript that a prominent Springfield Democrat 'has come out for Harrison. Ain't that a caution?' [4]

As election day approached the Democrats carefully guarded the voting. 'Democrats, watch the polls,' admonished the *State Register*. 'The Federalists [Whigs] . . . are not to be trusted. By fraud alone they expect to succeed. Challenge

[1] Jan., 1840. *Works*, I, 142–5.

[2] Lincoln to Stuart, Jan. 20, 1840. *Works*, I, 146–7.

[3] *Ib.*, March 1, 1840. *Works*, I, 148–50.

[4] *Ib.*, March 26, 1840. *Works*, I, 150–1.

every voter who is not known to be an inhabitant of the State for the last six months. See that no one votes twice or oftener. . . . "eternal vigilance is the price of liberty."' [1]

In spite of seemingly insurmountable disadvantages, and in spite of the crushing Whig victory in the nation, the Democrats carried Illinois. This extraordinary State triumph was due to Douglas more than to any other man. With that political dexterity and resourcefulness in which he was unequalled, Douglas advanced two issues peculiar to Illinois and fresh in the minds of the people. These issues were the partisan decision of the Whig majority of the Supreme Court by which, in practical effect, the Whig Secretary of State was given a life tenure of office, and the Whig effort to disfranchise the so-called 'alien vote' in the State — both questions, which, as we shall see, were to cause an unprecedented upheaval in the next Legislature. Illinois went for Van Buren by a heavy majority and the Legislature was overwhelmingly Democratic. But the Whigs won in Sangamon County and Lincoln was once more a member of the House.

On November 23, 1840, Lincoln entered the House, the last session of that body he ever was to attend as a member. Among the new representatives was a young lawyer from St. Clair County, named Lyman Trumbull, who, almost immediately, became one of the Democratic leaders. Trumbull was a native of Connecticut where he had been well educated at Bacon Academy, then second only to Yale, and he could read the Greek and Latin classics in the original text. His family was one of the most prominent in Connecticut, and Lyman was of the seventh generation of Trumbulls in America. The boy had started out for himself and after teaching school in Georgia, came to Belleville, Illinois. There he studied law in the office of Governor Reynolds and soon began the practice of his profession.[2]

Trumbull was a slender, good looking young man of medium height, with blue eyes and intellectual face. His bearing was quiet and cordial though dignified, his manners those of a well-

[1] *Illinois State Register*, Oct. 30, 1840.

[2] *Life of Lyman Trumbull:* Horace White, 1–7.

bred person; and his ability, integrity, and moral courage were recognized by all. He was to become a principal and distinguished actor in the drama of Lincoln's career, and for that reason his conduct and attitude during this session are of moment.

Again Lincoln received his party's vote for speaker, but was again beaten by William Lee D. Ewing.[1] In the election of Clerk of the House, party lines were obliterated, that pugnacious Democrat and vigilant friend of the Southern States, John Calhoun, receiving a majority of fifty-seven over the combined votes of his three opponents.

In his message Governor Carlin told the Legislature that the reason for calling it two weeks before the regular date was the tremendous State debt created by the Internal Improvement scheme, that offspring of 'improvident legislation.' There was no money to pay the interest falling due January 4 [1], 1841, and the General Assembly must provide funds before that time. This could be done only by selling State bonds below par, which existing law forbade. 'The future destiny of the State for weal or for woe depends upon the direction of the crisis.' [2]

In this disastrous situation every expedient was advanced that anybody could think of — even repudiation was urged. Almost at once the ancient enemies of Springfield took advantage of the mingled wrath and confusion of members; and Richard Bently of Bond County offered a joint resolution for the repeal of all laws for the removal of the State capital from Vandalia to Springfield and the return of the seat of government to Vandalia, 'until the State debt is paid.' This extraordinary resolution actually was adopted by the House, apparently without objection.[3] Seemingly the manœuver did not alarm Lincoln, who knew that the wild project would be killed in the Senate, as it promptly was.

As the end of the special session drew near indescribable excitement developed. The Bank act of the previous Legislature authorized the State Banks to continue their suspension of specie payments 'until the close of the next session of the Gen-

[1] Ewing forty-six, Lincoln thirty-six. *House Journal*, Sess. 1840–1, 5.
[2] *Ib.*, 18–30. [3] *Ib.*, 38.

eral Assembly;'[1] and the Banks desired to maintain as long as possible this advantageous condition. The Springfield State Bank held practically all of the State funds. It was, substantially, the public treasury. All warrants of the State Auditor were drawn on the Bank and paid in the paper of that concern. This was the case with salaries of State officers and members of the Legislature; and so the Bank held the whip-hand over the entire State Government.[2]

As has been said, the Legislature had been called to meet two weeks before the regular time for the sole purpose of providing means to pay the interest on the public debt, due January 1, 1841, and the Democrats held that the session should expire before the first Monday in December, on which day the Constitution required the regular session to begin. If, then, the present Legislature should adjourn before Monday, December 7, under the law the State Bank would have to resume specie payment on that date, or forfeit its charter and close its doors.

Under Lincoln's leadership the Whigs determined that there should be no adjournment and that the special should merge into the regular session, both sessions to be a single and continuous session. If this were done the Bank would, of course, be saved from embarrassment, perhaps collapse, at least for a season. The Democrats were equally determined that the Bank, so long favored by the Legislature, should have no further reprieve.[3]

Thus came the comic struggle in which Lincoln played so inappropriate and ludicrous a part. In response to instructions given by the House almost immediately after its organization,[4] the Judiciary Committee submitted a report on the question whether the special session was a part of the former or of the approaching session. The Committee held that the present was a special session and should adjourn *sine die* on Saturday, December 5. The Whig minority of the Committee filed a long report to the contrary, which was promptly laid on the table.[5]

In this state of affairs the Legislature assembled on Saturday

[1] Act, Jan. 31, 1840; *Laws of Illinois*, 1839–40, 15.
[2] Ford, 225. [3] *Ib.*, 224–7.
[4] *House Journal*, Sess. 1840–1, 35–6. [5] *Ib.*, 68–71.

morning. Seemingly the fate of the Bank was at stake. William H. Bissell of Monroe County moved a joint resolution of adjournment which, after three roll-calls was adopted and sent to the Senate for concurrence. Lincoln moved that the House adjourn; the Democratic majority refused, but adjourned only until three o'clock that afternoon,[1] when, as the Democrats expected, the Senate would concur in the House resolution and the House concur in that of the Senate, thus ending the session and blasting the hopes of the State Bank.

There was but one way to defeat the Democratic plan, and, as it was thought, save the Bank, and make the two sessions one. That way was to prevent a quorum in either Senate or House, since the Democrats had a heavy majority in both. So the Whigs absented themselves, leaving Lincoln and a few trusted lieutenants in the House to watch proceedings and demand ayes and noes, yet without a following large enough to make a quorum. By some mischance a quorum was secured in the Senate which promptly passed a joint resolution of adjournment *sine die* and sent it to the House.

In that body no quorum could be procured. The doorkeeper was sent out to gather in the recalcitrant Whigs, and returned with the doleful news that they refused to come. The doors were locked to prevent the escape of the Whigs already there. For hours the angry Democrats spoke and raged. 'The greatest excitement prevailed.' McClernand thundered denunciations, and pointed to the constitutional provision giving the House power to 'compel' attendance of members. Again the officer of the House was despatched to bring in the absentees, this time by force. The angry Whigs scorned his orders, spurned his demand. Cyrus Edwards of Madison County was found in the store of his nephew, Ninian W. Edwards, and, hand upon the cane under his arm, threatened the doorkeeper with physical resistance.

Thus matters went on until the candles were lit in the House. The watchful Lincoln was enjoying the predicament of the Democrats; but his amusement turned to consternation when suddenly the Speaker announced a quorum. Several sick Demo-

[1] *House Journal*, Sess. 1840–1, 76–7.

cratic members had reported, some of them having risen from their beds. Quickly the Senate resolution of adjournment was put to a vote. Lincoln and the other Whigs completely lost their heads and voted;[1] then 'Lincoln came under great excitement, and having attempted and failed to get out at the door, very unceremoniously *raised the window and jumped out*, followed by one or two other members.' But the Whig gymnastics were belated, for the Democratic resolution had been adopted, the slow-witted if heroic Whigs having themselves furnished the quorum by which their defeat was achieved.[2] As we shall see, Lincoln was thinking of a personal matter which, before long, incapacitated him altogether.

The Democrats were in great glee. Decidedly the joke was on Lincoln. The Democratic organ was sure that he was not hurt by his flying leap, since 'it was noticed that his *legs* reached nearly from the window to the ground.' Surely the feat would make Lincoln 'famous.' Why not raise the State House '*one story higher*, in order to have the House set in the *third story!* so as to prevent members from *jumping out of the windows?*' If that were done 'Mr. Lincoln will in the future have *to climb down the spout.*'[3]

And why, asked the Democrats, this absurd and lawless performance? 'To serve the Banks!' 'To prevent the Banks from resuming specie payments on the opening of the new session on Monday!' And that, too, in face of the fact that the State Bank at Springfield 'had informed the Legislature that she was ready at any moment to resume specie payments' and had actually done so when the disgraceful Whig manœuver failed her.[4]

The Whig organ was even harsher in its indictment of the Democrats. That party had committed an 'outrage' on the

[1] *House Journal*, Sess. 1840–1, 79–80. They voted nay, of course, but they were, therefore, recorded as being present, which was all the Democrats needed.

[2] *Illinois State Register*, Dec. 11, 1840. The writer of this account states that he 'stood inside, near the door of the House, and was an eye witness' to the proceedings. Also see *ib.*, Jan. 8, 1841, reprinting letter of William A. Munsell of Edgar County, a Whig member of the House in the *Paris Statesman*. The vote was forty-six ayes to fifteen nays. (*House Journal*, Sess. 1840–1, 80.) Had all the Whigs stayed away, or had Lincoln and his fellow Whigs present with him in the House jumped out of the windows before voting, they would have won the fight.

[3] *Illinois State Register*, Dec. 11, 1840. [4] *Ib.*

people by the 'war it commenced against the State Bank.' The Democratic adjournment resolution was designed to ruin the Bank; by that action 'the farmer had been seriously injured,' because dealers could not buy his pork, since the Bank could not extend credit to business men. The Democrats had hurt the State Government, too, for the Bank could no longer assist it and the State must borrow from 'foreign capitalists.' [1]

As will presently appear, however, the 'rag barons,' which was the popular name for the officers and directors of the Bank,[2] had their way in the end and a new law was enacted giving the Bank greater privileges than ever.[3]

[1] *Sangamo Journal*, March 12, 1841.

[2] Ford, 227. The Democrats called the Whigs 'the ragocracy' or vassals of the Bank; the Bank's paper was called 'bank rags,' 'printed lies,' etc.

[3] The Whig position in this strange episode is well stated by Joseph Gillespie who was with Lincoln in the House guarding the Whig and Bank interest:

'Gov. Carlin convened the Legislature of 1840–41, by proclamation: two weeks earlier than it would have met under the constitution. At the previous session an act had been passed legalizing the suspension of specie payments by the Bank untill the end of the next session of the general assembly.

'On the morning of the last day of the first two weeks of the session, as we supposed, it was ascertained that the Democrats had determined to adjourn *sine die* and make those two weeks a distinct session, at the end of which the Bank would be compelled to resume specie payments or forfeit its charter. The Whigs believed that this step would be not only unfair to the Bank which had had no notice of or made any preparation for such a proceeding and that it would benefit only the Banks of other states which held the paper of our Bank by enabling them to draw its specie for its bills which they held while it could get nothing from them on their bills which it held, and that the loss of the depreciation of our Bank circulation would fall principally upon our citizens who were holders of small sums.

'The Whigs determined if possible to prevent the *sine die* adjournment knowing that the Constitution would convene the Legislature on the following Monday. It required a quorum to adjourn *sine die*. Less than a quorum could adjourn from day to day. As the constitution then stood it was necessary to have two members to call the ayes and nays to show that a quorum was not voting. If the Whigs absented themselves there would not be a quorum left, even with the two who should be deputed to call the ayes and nays.

'The Whigs immediately held a meeting and resolved that they would all stay out except Lincoln and me who were to call the ayes and nays. We appeared in the afternoon, motion to adjourn *sine die* was made and we called the ayes and nays. The Democrats discovered the game and the sergeant-at-arms was sent out to gather up the absentees.

'There was great excitement in the House, which was then held in a church in Springfield. We soon discovered that several Whigs had been caught and brought in and that the plan had been spoiled and we, Lincoln and I, determined to leave the Hall and going to the door found it locked and then raised a window and jumped out, but not untill the democrats had succeeded in adjourning. Mr. Gridley of McLean accompanied us in our exit.

'The result of this operation was just as we anticipated; the Bank resumed and paid

Hard pressed as the Legislature was by the financial plight of the State and the suffering of the people, national politics again drew the sharp attention of House, Senate, and lobby. The defeat of Van Buren and election of Harrison, who would soon take office, alarmed the Democrats for the fate of the Sub-treasury law. Might it not be repealed and the National Bank revived by the victorious Whigs? Carlin had raised the danger signal in his message: although 'the virtue and patriotism of the people' had triumphed 'over a National Bank,' let lovers of free institutions be on their guard.[1]

In the very thick of the turmoil and excitement over impending State insolvency and proposed repudiation, Democratic resolutions were offered against a National Bank, for the Independent Treasury, and in support of Van Buren. Even these were thought to be too mild, and a more ardent champion of the masses, Joseph W. Ormsbee of Scott County, instantly proposed a substitute that the National Government was now 'as simple and pure . . . and as much the Government of the people,' as it had been when created; that the Government is now 'free' from the abuses of 'the British credit system' which, if continued, 'would plunge the laboring classes . . . into hopeless poverty and misery, and make them slaves to stock-jobbers and bankers;' that public funds, once diverted from legitimate purposes and 'made the basis of bank discounts,' were now secure, the unholy alliance between the Government and banks having been sundered; that the foreign debt is now paid, excessive tariff taxation abolished, and the public domain saved 'for poor yet honest and industrious farmers to convert into freemen's homes;' and that Jackson and Van Buren had wrought these great reforms and 'deliverance for the people and their Government.' [2]

out nearly all of its specie to Banks and brokers in other states while not a cent could be obtained from them, as the Banks everywhere had been authorized to suspend specie payments. In a few weeks the folly of the course of the majority became apparent and they themselves introduced a bill again legalizing a suspension, but it was too late.' Gillespie to Herndon, Jan. 31, 1866. Weik MSS.

In this vivid account, Gillespie makes but one error. There were seven other Whigs in the House in addition to Lincoln and himself. See report of the incident, written at the time by an eye witness, *Illinois State Register*, Dec. 11, 1840.

[1] *House Journal*, Sess. 1840–1, 28–30. [2] *Ib.*, 147–8.

The Senate acted quickly and adopted resolutions requesting and instructing the Illinois delegation to prevent the repeal of the Independent Treasury law and the reëstablishment of a National Bank.[1] Bitter partisan debate followed and speedily the Whig counter resolutions appeared. The Whigs declared that they believed the people to be entirely capable of self-government; that the recent presidential election proved that they were determined to get rid of 'the monarchical financial experiments of Martin Van Buren, with all their rich fruits of low prices and low wages, and to return to the good old republican usages;' that to dispute the verdict of the people at the polls was an 'insult' to popular intelligence and virtue; that 'as Republicans,' believing in the people, 'we acquiesce in the sentence of condemnation . . . upon Mr. Van Buren, with his Sub-Treasury and standing army projects;' and that Van Buren's misuse of Federal office-holders to defeat Harrison and elect himself, makes it necessary for Harrison to 'reform' patronage thus prostituted.[2]

By the proper parliamentary motion, Lincoln secured the ayes and noes on the Whig resolutions, which were defeated by a strict party vote, Lincoln voting for them.[3] Finally the Senate resolutions against a National Bank, for the Independent Treasury and endorsing Van Buren were concurred in, Lincoln voting against them.[4] Thus Lincoln heard and took part in another thorough if heated discussion of government financial methods and policies, as well as of the weighty constitutional questions involved in the National Bank controversy. By his thirty-first birthday, he was as fully informed on these matters as debate, conversation, and study could make him.

Although as Whig floor leader and one of those largely responsible for the disastrous predicament into which the improvement orgy had placed Illinois, Lincoln's part in the legislation on this subject does not appear except through his votes; and the meaning of these is not always clear. Sometimes, indeed,

[1] *House Journal*, Sess. 1840–1, 151. [2] *Ib.*, 170–1.

[3] On a motion to table, forty-two ayes to thirty-four nays, Lincoln voting nay. *Ib.*, 171.

[4] The vote was forty-four ayes to thirty-one nays, Lincoln voting nay. *Ib.*, 167.

they are contradictory. Even before consideration was given to the various recommendations in the Governor's message, a storm of resolutions broke upon the House and these expressions of the legislative mind and temper continued — resolutions of inquiry as to what the Board of Public Works had done and was doing, for an investigation of the 'whole proceedings' of the Canal commissioners, for the repeal of all improvement laws, for the immediate suspension of improvement work and the transfer of the projects to private corporations.[1]

Lincoln voted for the repeal of the Internal Improvement laws and against a proposition of Trumbull's that the Board of Public Works turn over to an agent to be appointed by the Governor, all books, papers, property, and effects 'in their possession . . . which belong to the State,' and that everybody employed on internal improvements be discharged.[2] Speeches fell like hailstones from a Legislature prolific in oratory, sterile in device.[3] But Lincoln did not address the House; in this emergency the ready and resourceful talker was strangely silent.

Rumors had spread that the State would repudiate her debts and resolutions were offered in the House affirming the contrary;[4] but before the House acted upon them the Senate adopted resolutions that Illinois would honor all contracts made by her agents 'in pursuance of law . . . when the consideration had been received.'[5] Lincoln was appointed on a joint select committee to ascertain whether the State Bank would loan the State enough money to pay the interest on the improvement debt about to fall due.[6]

The bill for settling the internal improvement debt was rushed through the House, Lincoln first voting against considering the measure and then against the bill itself, which was passed

[1] *House Journal*, Sess. 1840–1, 35–9.

[2] *Ib.*, 40–1. Trumbull's amendment was adopted fifty-one ayes to thirty-five nays, Lincoln voting nay. The proposal to repeal the improvement laws was made in an amendment offered by John J. Hardin which was laid on the table, fifty-six ayes to thirty-one nays, Lincoln voting nay and, to that extent, for repeal.

[3] *Sangamo Journal*, Feb. 2, 5, 9, 12, 16, 1841.

[4] *House Journal*, Sess. 1840–1, 37. [5] *Ib.*, 41.

[6] *Ib.*, 47. The loan was arranged. See Bank Act, p. 287, *infra*.

by a vote of exactly seven to one, only ten other members standing with Lincoln.[1] Yet the next day Lincoln voted against Trumbull's motion to table the bill providing for the payment of interest on the public debt.[2]

Soon thereafter Lincoln introduced a bill of his own for this purpose [3] which was referred to his Committee on Finance; but the provisions of his measure cannot be ascertained.

Quantities of State bonds had been hypothecated or sold by careless or corrupt State agents without returns to the State Treasury and from the first the harassed legislators objected to the payment of them. Trumbull offered a significant resolution against paying interest on any debt 'contracted . . . in violation of law, and when the consideration has not been received,' which was referred to the Judiciary Committee; [4] and immediately another long resolution was offered that, while it was the duty of the Legislature to 'sustain the good faith and credit of the State,' it would be 'criminal negligence . . . to rush on and pledge still deeper the faith of the State' on mere assertions as to the amount of debt and interest due on bonds for which the State had and had not received payment, and therefore that the Fund Commissioner should lay the exact facts before the House.[5]

On Lincoln's motion the bill for payment of interest on the public debt was taken up and he offered amendments that enough additional money be provided to pay freight, duty, and other charges on railroad iron received or contracted for, and to pay for the prosecution of suits by Illinois in the courts of New York; and that no interest be paid on State bonds in the hands of *original* purchasers for which the State had received no consideration. To Lincoln's last amendment, Trumbull moved to

[1] *House Journal*, Sess. 1840–1, 71–2. The vote was seventy-seven ayes to eleven nays, Lincoln voting nay.

[2] *Ib.*, 73–4. Trumbull's motion included amendments that hypothecated State bonds should not be forfeited for less than par and that the State should not pay more than seven per cent on borrowed money nor pay any interest on bonds 'whereon the State has not received the money originally contracted for.' *Ib.*, 73.

Trumbull's motion was adopted by a vote of sixty ayes to twenty-six nays, Lincoln voting nay. *Ib.*, 74.

[3] *Ib.*, 86. [4] *Ib.*, 87.

[5] *Ib.*, 88–9. This resolution was adopted without roll-call.

include 'any State bonds' which have been disposed of without authority of law, and for which no consideration had been received by the State.[1]

After an elaborate report from the Fund Commissioner, calls of House and adjournments, Trumbull's amendment was adopted, Lincoln voting against it; [2] and then Lincoln's amendment as amended by Trumbull's amendment was also adopted, Lincoln opposing his own proposition when thus altered.[3] Thereupon further progress of the bill was blocked by the House's refusal to order it engrossed, a decisive parliamentary triumph for Lincoln. Lincoln quickly riveted his advantage by having the original bill, which was instantly reintroduced, referred to his Committee on Finance.[4]

Meanwhile the Senate passed an interest-paying bill and Lincoln voted against an amendment that no interest be paid on bonds sold without authority and without payment having been received by the State.[5] Then he voted for an amendment authorizing State bonds to be hypothecated in 'any amount' necessary to raise money to pay interest on the Internal Improvement debt; [6] and again voted to hold up the bill itself.[7] Yet two days later, he reversed his vote and voted to engross the bill for third reading,[8] and for the passage of the measure.[9] The Senate quickly returned the bill with amendments, which the House concurred in, Lincoln voting for them; [10] and, at last, the law was enacted.

Time and again repudiation was urged in the guise of refusing to pay interest on bonds sold without authority and without

[1] *House Journal*, Sess. 1840–1, 89–90.

[2] Forty-six ayes to thirty-nine nays, Lincoln voting nay. *Ib.*, 98.

[3] Forty-three ayes to forty-two nays, Lincoln voting nay. *Ib.*, 99.

[4] Fifty-seven nays to thirty ayes, Lincoln voting nay and Trumbull aye. *Ib.*, 99.

[5] *Ib.*, 106–7. On a motion to table this vote was thirty-nine ayes to forty-three nays, Lincoln voting aye; and on the amendment itself, the vote was forty-one ayes to forty nays, Lincoln voting nay.

[6] Defeated forty-seven nays to forty-one ayes, Lincoln voting aye. *Ib.*, 108.

[7] By refusing to order the bill to be engrossed, fifty-one nays to thirty-six ayes, Lincoln voting nay. *Ib.*, 109.

[8] Fifty-one ayes to thirty-seven nays, Lincoln voting aye. *Ib.*, 118.

[9] Fifty-two ayes to thirty-six nays, Lincoln voting aye. *Ib.*, 119.

[10] *Ib.*, 121.

consideration having been received by the State; time and again the counter proposition was offered, that this refusal should apply only to original holders of the State's obligations.[1] At every point Lincoln stood firmly for full payment when the securities were held by any except the original purchasers. So persistent were these demands that the Judiciary Committee formally protested.[2]

Finally the matter came to a head. Francis A. Olds of Macoupin County offered a remarkable resolution that 'the State of Illinois disavows all and every contract or transaction of any agent' of the State 'not warranted by expressed authority given them by law.' 'Whilst repudiating' all such illegal contracts, Illinois 'expressly declares' that she will pay 'all moneys received, and pay a just compensation for any property accepted' by the State, even though the same 'may have been acquired without legal authority.'

This last and most plausibly stated of the repudiation proposals was promptly tabled, Lincoln voting thus to dispose of it.[3] Throughout this perplexing fight over tangled questions, Lincoln again displayed that conservatism which so strongly marked his entire career in the Legislature. Another vote out of many illustrates the same disposition. An investigation of the Commissioners in charge of work upon the Illinois and Michigan Canal was ordered, but Lincoln voted against it.[4]

On Wednesday, December 16, the General Assembly elected Samuel McRoberts a Senator of the United States, the Whigs voting solidly for Cyrus Edwards, representative from Madison County. The incident is worthy of particular mention because Edwards himself, instead of casting his complimentary vote for Lincoln, voted for Edward D. Baker, State Senator from Sangamon.[5] Later in the session James Shields was elected Auditor of

[1] For example, *House Journal*, Sess. 1840–1, 130–1.

[2] *Ib.*, 130.

[3] Forty-one ayes to thirty-seven nays, Lincoln voting aye and Trumbull nay. *Ib.*, 146–7.

[4] There were two votes, forty-five ayes to forty-two nays and forty-four ayes to forty-two nays, Lincoln voting nay both times. *Ib.*, 119–20.

[5] McRoberts seventy-seven, Edwards fifty, Baker one. *Ib.*, 126–7.

Public Accounts, Lincoln and the Whigs voting for Levi Davis,[1] a circumstance which, within less than a year, was to result unhappily for Lincoln.

The outcome of the agitation and distress of the Legislature over the State debt and collapse of the Internal Improvement system was the enactment of two brief and peremptory laws, repealing the act for the settlement of the internal improvement debts passed at the previous session, directing the State Treasurer to take charge of all improvements and the books and papers relating thereto, and to adjust and settle accounts; and requiring the hypothecation of State bonds to raise money for the payment of interest on the improvement debt.[2] After 1841, testifies Governor Ford, no further attempt was made to pay even interest on the State debt and Illinois 'became a stench in the nostrils of the civilized world.' [3]

The 'rag barons' were more successful than ever and an act for the relief of the State Bank at Springfield was passed, setting aside the forfeiture of the Bank charter for having again suspended specie payments, authorizing the Bank to charge seven per cent interest on loans and discounts for less than six months and nine per cent for longer periods, granting the privilege of issuing for two years, one, two, and three dollar notes upon several conditions, among which was the handling of State funds without charge and the purchase at par of $200,000 of State bonds, the proceeds to be 'applied exclusively' to the redemption of hypothecated improvement bonds and payment of interest on the State's indebtedness.[4]

During the six years that Lincoln had been a member of the Legislature, no change whatever had been made in the ancient criminal code of the State, the provisions of which were as inconsistent as they were cruel; and the Attorney General, Wickliffe Kitchell, presented a succinct report pointing out the al-

[1] *House Journal*, Sess. 1840–1, 270–1. In 1835 Lincoln had written to Governor Duncan recommending the appointment of Davis as Auditor. MS. in Barrett Collection.

[2] Acts, Dec. 14, 16, 1840. *Laws of Illinois*, 1841, 166–8.

[3] Ford, 222. Ford was elected Governor in 1842 and speaks with too much feeling, perhaps, since he had the handling of this impossible situation. He was a Justice of the Supreme Court when the Democrats nominated him for Governor.

[4] Act, Feb. 27, 1841. *Laws of Illinois*, 1841, 40–2.

terations which were imperatively demanded. He made particular note of the grave defect in the liquor law of 1839 and urged that sales of intoxicants in less quantities than one quart be prohibited 'in any situation, or under any circumstances whatsoever.'[1]

Although, in his message, Governor Carlin made no mention of the liquor question, Trumbull reported a license bill from the Judiciary Committee soon after the House was organized.[2] Some ominous amendments were offered, one of which, to repeal the existing law prohibiting the granting of licenses against the majority protest of citizens, was finally adopted.[3] Richard Murphy of Cook County moved to substitute for the license bill a brief and drastic prohibition measure, forbidding the granting of any license whatever to sell 'vinous or spirituous liquors in this State' and imposing a fine of one thousand dollars upon 'any person who violates this act by selling such liquors.' Lincoln moved to lay Murphy's substitute on the table, which was done by a vote of seventy-five to eight, Lincoln voting aye.[4] When a motion to recommit the bill to the Judiciary Committee, with instructions to inquire into the constitutionality of the bill and the expediency of applying the penalties and prohibitions of the bill '*to all* persons whatsoever,' as well as to grocers, came to a vote and was defeated by a vote of fifty-eight to eighteen, Lincoln was not present.[5]

Nor did he answer to the call of his name when other important amendments to the license bill were voted on. Just before adjournment, Friday, January 1, 1841, he voted to lay on the table an amendment to the license bill the nature of which does not appear;[6] and the next day he was not present when the House rejected an amendment that money from licenses and fines should be applied to the education of 'poor children' of the township 'wherein such tipling house is established.'[7] He failed, too, to vote on an amendment fixing license fees at from five to

[1] *House Journal*, Sess. 1840–1, 13.

[2] *Ib.*, 98. At the beginning of the session, Trumbull had offered a resolution which was adopted, instructing the Judiciary Committee to report a bill for the punishment of every person keeping a grocery without license. *Ib.*, 32.

[3] *Ib.*, 111, 116. [4] *Ib.*, 136. [5] *Ib.*, 150. [6] *Ib.*, 172.

[7] *Ib.*, 174.

three hundred dollars, with bond of two hundred dollars;[1] nor did he vote when the bill finally was passed.[2] Near the close of the day he voted twice to adjourn.[3]

From the opening of the session November 23, 1840, until January 1, 1841, Lincoln, as the Whig floor leader, had been constant in attendance, having missed but five or six of the many roll-calls during those busy five weeks. Beginning with Friday, January 1, he showed negligence. He was present but once on that day and twice on the next, each time at the close of business. On Monday he did not appear at all, notwithstanding much business was transacted, some of particular interest to Lincoln.[4] On Tuesday he was again absent except at the opening of the House when he voted for the incorporation of Galesburg.[5] On Wednesday he voted in the morning and again just before adjournment.[6] On Thursday Lincoln answered one roll-call in the forenoon, but did not vote on two important questions immediately thereafter;[7] during the afternoon no vote was taken. From January 13 until January 21, 1841, he answered to his name only once.[8]

Thus for three weeks beginning with the new year Lincoln was present and only for short times on but four days, while he was not in the House at all during the last of the three weeks, except for a single vote on a trivial matter. For he was ill, sick in mind and, at times, sick in body. He declared that he was so miserable that he was incapable of business of any kind.[9] He had

[1] *House Journal*, Sess. 1840–1, 175. The amendment was beaten fifty-one to twenty-five.

[2] *Ib.* The vote was forty ayes to thirty-six nays. The Senate also passed a license bill (*ib.*, 394) and, finally, without further roll-calls (*ib.*, 418, 421, 423) a new law was enacted which repealed the section of the license law of 1839 prohibiting the granting of licenses when a majority of citizens affected petitioned against such license. (*Laws of Illinois*, 1838–9, 72.) But the new law reduced the quantity to be sold by groceries from less than one gallon to less than one quart. *Ib.*, 1841, 178–9.

[3] *Ib.*, 176–7.

[4] *Ib.*, 177–84. For example: The request of Lincoln's Finance Committee to be relieved from further consideration of a resolution on the Finances of the State, which was denied by a vote of thirty-eight to thirty-six.

[5] *Ib.*, 184. Again important matters were considered and important votes taken on that day, especially in relation to the Bank and the safe keeping of public funds. *Ib.*, 185–90.

[6] *Ib.*, 191, 194. [7] *Ib.*, 196–8.

[8] A vote on the creation of a county. *Ib.*, 245. [9] See p. 314, *infra*.

experienced a misadventure, which came near unbalancing his intellect, and from the effects of which he never entirely recovered.

By the beginning of the fourth week in January, 1841, Lincoln had so far regained his composure as again to attend regularly the sessions of the House,[1] and thereafter we find his vote recorded on nearly every roll-call. Sometimes he took active part in the proceedings, as when the amount due from citizens of Springfield on their guarantee for the building of the State House was in question,[2] upon which Lincoln spoke for his fellow-townsmen [3] and upon the passage of the State Bank bill.[4] In four or five weeks after his return, he was also once more able to amuse the House by funny stories in debate. He offered an amendment to the Canal bill that the State pay in bonds at par value for all work yet to be done and that three million dollars of bonds be issued for that purpose.[5]

Upon this proposition a lively dispute arose. Wickliffe Kitchell, Representative from Montgomery County and also Attorney General of the State, opposed Lincoln's amendment. He charged that although the State was already 'prostrated by debt,' Lincoln wanted to pile on still more; he was like the drunkard in Arkansas who 'took so much of the cretur' that he lost his reason, and knew nothing; but when he heard the word 'brandy' quickly cried out, 'that is the stuff.'

Lincoln's only reply was a counter-anecdote. Kitchell's course during the whole session reminded Lincoln of 'an eccentric old bachelor' who lived in Indiana. Like Kitchell, 'he was very famous for seeing big bugaboos in every thing. . . . One day he went out hunting. His brother heard him firing back in the field, and went out to see what was the matter. He found him loading and firing as fast as possible into the top of a tree.' His brother could see nothing in the tree and 'asked him what he was firing at.' A squirrel, exclaimed the gloomy sportsman, and

[1] *Illinois State Register*, Jan. 29, 1841.

[2] *House Journal*, Sess. 1840–1, 281–3.

[3] *Illinois State Register*, Feb. 5, 1841.

[4] *House Journal*, Sess. 1840–1, 482–7, 506–7.

[5] On motion of William H. Bissell, this amount was reduced to one million five hundred thousand dollars.

kept on firing. His brother looked again but could discover no squirrel. So he looked over the person of the hunter and 'found on one of his eye lashes a big louse crawling about.' So with Kitchell; 'he imagined he could see squirrels every day, when they were nothing but lice.' The press reporter records that, at this point, 'the House was convulsed with laughter.'[1] Thus Lincoln carried his amendment.[2]

The election of a Public Printer was of especial interest to Lincoln. His close political ally, Simeon Francis, owner and editor of the *Sangamo Journal*, the Whig organ of the State, wished to be chosen for that lucrative office, then held by Francis's rival, William Walters, owner and editor of the Democratic organ, the *Illinois State Register*. Scarcely had the regular session begun, when Lincoln procured the appointment of a special committee to investigate 'the very large expenditure for . . . public printing' and to report a bill for the reduction of that outlay.[3] Lincoln was made a member of the Committee of which Trumbull was Chairman. Simultaneously the *Sangamo Journal* began an attack on Walters for overcharging the State, but Walters welcomed the inquiry.[4]

After prolonged investigation Trumbull reported from the Committee that the charges of the *Journal* and Lincoln were unfounded. Lincoln filed no minority report nor did he criticise the Committee's report, a circumstance which caused the accused editor great glee. 'Mr. Lincoln has recovered from his indisposition,' sneered the *Register* on January 29, 1841, 'and has attended the House for more than a week past, during which time he made no minority report, although he attended every meeting of the committee of Investigation. Now, we ask any man of either political party, whether Mr. Lincoln is a man who would have refused to speak out, if he had had anything to tell?'[5] He was not, indeed; but during the latter part of the session Lincoln was silent on matters infinitely more important

[1] *Sangamo Journal*, March 5, 1841; reporting proceedings on Feb. 26.

[2] Forty-one ayes to thirty-two nays. *House Journal*, Sess. 1840–1, 521. The reporter seems to have been so amused that he wrote that Lincoln's amendment was lost by this vote.

[3] *Ib.*, 137. [4] *Illinois State Register*, Jan. 2, 8, 1841.

[5] *Ib.*, Jan. 29, 1841.

than the election of a Public Printer.[1] Francis was bitter in his disappointment; but, said the *Register*, did not Francis 'procure' the investigation to be made and was it not 'conducted by his friend Mr. Lincoln?' Why then, did not the *Journal* publish the Committee's report?

When the session was more than half over, the hottest and, perhaps, the bitterest fight occurred that ever took place in the Legislature of Illinois. That contest and the outcome of it gave the Whigs of the State a rallying cry for years to come and is historic in American judicial annals. Yet, although he had sufficiently recovered from his mental and physical ills to attend the sessions of the House, and notwithstanding that he was the floor leader of his party, Lincoln took no part in that vital party conflict.

The battle arose over the announced purpose and finally successful effort of the Democratic leaders to enact a law by which the Whig majority in the Supreme Court would be converted into an overwhelming Democratic majority. Three Whigs and one Democrat then sat upon the Supreme Bench; and the Democrats proposed to create immediately five additional places in the Court and fill them by electing Democratic judges at the present session of the General Assembly.

The Whigs were angered almost to the point of physical combat. This was revolution, they cried — revolution to be thwarted at any cost, at every hazard. What! prostitute the Judiciary to partisan uses! Never, so long as a Whig could protest, so long as a Whig could struggle, so long, indeed, as honest men, regardless of party, would respond to the cry of patriotism. To the rescue then! Free institutions were in peril! In such fashion, and with exclamations more lurid, came the acrimonious party engagement in the Legislature of Illinois during the winter of 1840–41.

The significance of it in the narrative of Lincoln's life and career is his failure to take part, except by voting, in this notable and dramatic political fray — a circumstance more weighty and

[1] Walters was re-elected, Francis getting only the habitually regular Whig vote. *House Journal*, Sess. 1840–1, 273. On the same day, one, William S. Lincoln, received the Whig vote for State's Attorney of the Second Judicial Circuit. He was not related to Lincoln.

full of meaning than would have been the case if he had led his fellow-partisans. He was distraught, his mind clouded, his heart bleak with despair, and for the first time in his life he took no interest in anything — for the moment, even politics did not attract or concern him. Presently we shall see how he fell into this melancholy state of mind and feeling, a condition, be it repeated, out of which he was never entirely to emerge.

The cause of the political storm in the Legislature was a decision of one political case by the Supreme Court, its reported attitude upon another, and the belief of the Democrats that the Whig majority in both instances had acted as partisans and not as impartial judges. The first of these cases involved the tenure of office of the Secretary of State and the Governor's power to remove that official and appoint a successor. In 1829, Governor Edwards had appointed Alexander P. Field, then a Jackson man, who, like many others, became a Whig in a few years and an energetic and resourceful partisan. In 1838, Thomas Carlin, the first Democratic Governor to be elected since the period of partisanship began, after Field's refusal to resign, appointed John A. McClernand in his place. Field declined to give up the office and McClernand brought suit to oust him.[1] The circuit Judge, Sidney Breese, a man of ability and learning, decided in favor of McClernand, and Field appealed to the Supreme Court.[2]

At its December term, 1839, the Whig majority of that tribunal in an elaborate and extended opinion decided for Field, but the Democratic member of the Court filed a strong dissent.[3] This partisan action of the Court enraged the Democrats and they attacked the Court with ferocity.[4] Soon after the Legis-

[1] Ford, 213–4.

[2] In the Circuit Court Shields was the attorney for McClernand. His argument, which was strong and exhaustive, was published in full in the *Illinois State Register*, May 10, 1839, as was the opinion of Judge Breese which filled ten columns of that paper on May 24, 1839.

[3] Field *vs.* People *ex rel* McClernand: 2 Scammon, 79–184. One of the three Whig Justices did not sit because of relationship to Field. The case was fully argued, Douglas and Shields being of counsel for McClernand, while Justin Butterfield was the principal attorney for Field. The argument of Douglas was published in the *State Register*, Aug. 17, 1839, filling eight columns.

[4] *Illinois State Register*, Sept. 14, 1839. Editorial.

lature of 1839–40 convened, resolutions 'addressing' the Justices out of office for partisanship, ignorance, and general incompetency were offered; and even most of the Whigs, including Lincoln, voted against their indefinite postponement.[1]

The decision became a party issue in the Presidential campaign of 1840 and was one of the influences that carried Illinois for Van Buren. Again Carlin appointed McClernand Secretary of State and again Field declined to yield, the Whig Senate in both instances refusing to confirm the Governor's appointment. At the session of the Legislature of 1840–41, which was strongly Democratic in both Houses, Carlin appointed Douglas, the Senate confirmed the appointment and Field, weary of the struggle, finally gave up.[2] Undoubtedly the Whig leaders, perhaps convinced that the decision of the Supreme Court was wrong, advised the tenacious Field to stop the fight. He had been too heavy a load for them to carry in the late campaign.

The other political case involved the right of unnaturalized inhabitants to vote. The State Constitution gave the elective franchise to all free males over twenty-one years of age who had resided in the State for six months. Although both parties had striven to capture the foreign vote, the Democrats had secured most of it,[3] largely because of the skill and activity of Douglas. So the Whigs had raised the cry that the constitutional suffrage, broad as it was, did not include 'unnaturalized aliens;' and, to prevent them from voting against Harrison, had brought a fictitious suit before a Whig Judge at Galena, who promptly decided in favor of the Whigs.

To clinch this decision and make it the accepted law of the State, the case was taken to the Supreme Court; but the alarmed

[1] *House Journal*, Sess. 1839–40, 144–5. These resolutions well reflect the outraged feelings of the Democrats: the Justices had been in office too long; since the organization of the Court, the State had grown in population, wealth, intelligence, and everything else, 'with the exception of the intellectual improvement of the Justices of said [the Supreme] Court;' the majority decision in the Field case, whether 'the offspring of ignorance or . . . partizan feeling,' had violated the Constitution; and 'a vast majority of the citizens of Illinois ardently desire a change in the officers of said Court on the ground of incompetency . . . inability to discharge the duties devolving on them, and also for other and divers good and sufficient reasons.'

[2] Ford, 304. Douglas was appointed Nov. 30, 1840.

[3] The alien vote was about 10,000, of which 9,110 voted the Democratic ticket. Ford, 214–5.

Democrats took charge of the appeal. The case was argued in December, 1839, and again in June, 1840. The Democratic Justice, Theophilus W. Smith, discovered a defect in the record and told the Democratic lawyers of it. They in turn secured a postponement which carried the case over to the December term, after the presidential election. At the same time that he disclosed the flaw in the record to the Democratic lawyers, the Judge told Douglas and others that the three Whig Justices were about to decide the case against them and, indeed, that their opinions were already prepared.

Such was the source of the Democratic fury against the Supreme Court and of the Democratic assault upon it, such the origin of the memorable party conflict in the Legislature.[1] In a violent speech in the lobby, Douglas denounced the Supreme Court;[2] and a bill was quickly introduced creating five new Justices, thus making the membership of that tribunal nine in all; legislating out of office the nine circuit judges throughout the State, and assigning their duties to the Justices of the reorganized Supreme Court. Trumbull, Douglas, McClernand, and other Democratic leaders made support of this measure a test of party loyalty and standing.

To quiet the storm against it, the Supreme Court hastened its decision of the alien-voter case. The Court decided that the Democratic contention was correct; but while the opinion of Justice Smith was forthright and squarely on the main point, that of the Whig Justices was somewhat obscure and evasive.[3] The hurried action of the Court did not mollify the Democratic leaders. Neither did a written denial, signed by all the Justices including Smith, that they were about to decide the case before the election in 1840. The Democratic bill for the 'reorganization' of the Judiciary was pressed with determination and vigor. On the very day of Lincoln's permanent return to his duties in the House, this measure, until disposed of, was made the special order thenceforward for every afternoon.

The excitement was tremendous, debate virulent, personal encounters narrowly averted. Some of the speeches, however,

[1] Ford, 213–9. [2] *Ib.*, 219–20.

[3] Spragins *vs.* Houghton, 2 Scammon, 377–417. Judge Smith, the Democratic mem-

were very able and unspoiled by partisan rancor. Trumbull, in particular, made a notable argument against the Court for the reformation of the Judiciary.[1] For the Whigs Hardin spoke with much power, as did Cyrus Edwards.[2] So drastic was the Democratic plan, that many Democrats refused to accept it and voted with the enraged Whigs — only by a tie vote was a Whig motion to table the special order resolution defeated,[3] Lincoln voting aye. After ten days of acrimonious speeches, charge and counter charge, and many motions and roll-calls, the House passed the bill by a bare majority of two votes, Lincoln voting nay.

The Democratic managers mercilessly wielded the party whip to drive refractory members of the party into line. They were assailed and disciplined by the 'most unbounded abuse,' declared the Whig organ; they were ruled by a 'spirit of dark, vindictive and uncompromising proscription' which reduced them to 'abject terror.'[4] The desertion to the Whigs of but one more Democrat would have defeated the party measure by a tie vote.[5] 'A more perfect despotism never existed in the legislature of a free people,' said the *Sangamo Journal;* 'except for bloodshed, it would have resembled the General Assembly of France in the time of Robespierre and Marat.'[6]

Throughout this tumultuous and vindictive party battle, Lincoln was apathetic. He was not even present on the morning following the passage of the bill when John J. Hardin, who appears to have acted as Whig floor leader after Lincoln had ceased to take an active interest in the sessions,[7] moved that

ber of the Court, held that the inclusive words of the Constitution — 'all male inhabitants' — clearly covered those who were unnaturalized; while Lockwood and Wilson, the Whig Justices, concluded that the judges of election had no power, under the law, to investigate the question as to whether a person offering to vote had been naturalized. Again Douglas and Butterfield were the leading attorneys for the opposing sides, the arguments of both men being thorough and able.

[1] *Illinois State Register*, April 9, 1841, printing in full Trumbull's great speech which filled an entire page of that paper.

[2] The Whig organ published the speeches of Hardin and Edwards, as well as that of Senator William Gatewood, in full. *Sangamo Journal*, April 2, 9, May 21, 1841.

[3] Forty-one to forty-one. *House Journal*, Sess. 1840–1, 261.

[4] *Sangamo Journal*, March 12, 1841.

[5] The vote was forty-five ayes to forty-three nays. *House Journal*, Sess. 1840–1, 311.

[6] *Sangamo Journal*, March 12, 1841.

[7] See reports of the legislative proceedings. *Ib.*, Feb. 2 and 12, 1841.

permission be granted a member, who had been absent when the bill was passed, to record his vote. The Democrats were able to defeat the motion by only one majority.[1]

The Council of Revision disapproved the measure, the Senate again passed it over the veto [2] and sent it to the House, where again heated verbal encounters took place. After many roll-calls, Lincoln merely voting with his party, the House also passed the bill over the objections of the Council of Revision,[3] and thus, because of partisan politics in both Court and Legislature, the Supreme Court of Illinois was revolutionized. The Democrats were not without some excuse for their action. The General Assembly promptly elected five new Justices who, it must in fairness be said, were lawyers of preëminent ability, some of them of great learning, and all of them the equals, to say the very least, of the old Judges.[4]

Thirty-five Whigs, Lincoln among them, signed a strong protest, presented by Hardin and probably written by him.[5] So came to an end this aggravated party contest, thus was enacted this vitally important legislation, and such was the part taken by Lincoln in that historic matter.[6]

On March 1, 1841, the last session of the Legislature ever attended by Lincoln as a member, adjourned and he went to his law office in Springfield, 'gloom fairly dripping from him.' For more than six years he had served in the House and for the first time during that long period he left it without that happy buoyancy which his cheerful temperament and mounting fortunes had hitherto never failed to produce. We shall now pick up his daily life again and accompany him through years of discipline, vital in the development of his character and career.

[1] *House Journal*, Sess. 1840–1, 312. [2] *Ib.*, 358. [3] *Ib.*, 362–7.

[4] They were Sidney Breese, Thomas Ford, Samuel H. Treat, Walter B. Scates, and Stephen A. Douglas. It is interesting to note that Dan Stone received fourteen votes. (*Ib.*, 406.) For an impartial account of this affair see Ford, 212–22. Ford was one of the new Judges and afterward elected Governor. See also *Frontier State:* Pease, 279–81. Yet the *Sangamo Journal* charged that 'partisans the most violent' had been made Judges. *Ib.*, March 12, 1841.

Douglas's acceptance of his appointment after his bitter attacks upon the Court gave Lincoln advantage in the great debate of 1858.

[5] *House Journal*, Sess. 1840–1, 539–43.

[6] See Whig summary of the work of this Legislature in *Sangamo Journal*, Feb. 16, 1841.